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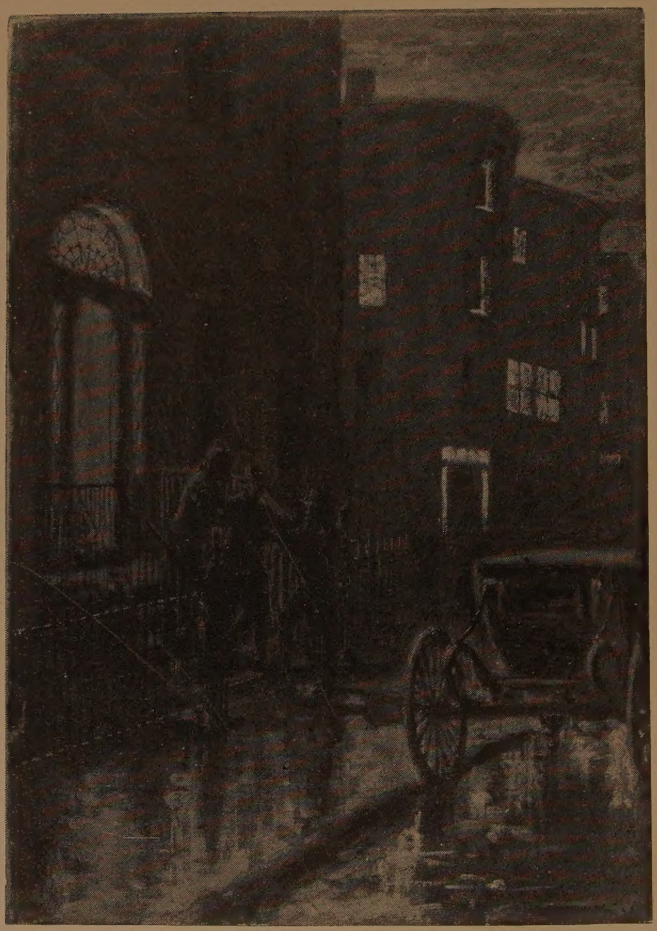

THEN OUT OF THE DOOR CAME JACOB DOLPH

THE STORIES

OF

H. C. BUNNER

FIRST SERIES

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY

BRANDER MATTHEWS

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1916

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To

A. L. B.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is now more than a quarter of a century since the most of the stories now gathered into this volume were first published. In the superabundant productivity of our writers of fiction the competition is incessant and deadly. Few, indeed, are the novels and the briefer tales which can hold their own even for a decade, and fewer yet are those which have to be brought out in new editions in response to the popular demand a score of years after their author has let the pen slip from his hand for the last time. This is the fortunate fate which has now befallen the short-stories of H. C. Bunner.

He was born at Oswego, New York, on August 3, 1855, and he died at Nutley, New Jersey, on May 11, 1896, cut short in a literary career wherein he had not attained to his full power. He had had a thorough schooling and prepared for Columbia College, which he was unable to enter—to his abiding regret. After a brief experience in an importing house, he became a newspaper man. When *Puck* began to be published in English he joined its staff,

and he soon became its editor, a post which he held to the end of his life. *Puck* was the earliest to succeed of all the many American attempts to establish a comic weekly; and in large measure its success was due to Bunner,—to his fertility, to his resourcefulness, to his insight and to his unfailing taste.

To *Puck* first and then to one or another of the leading American magazines Bunner began to contribute verse. Most of his poetry is to be classed as *vers de société,* as "familiar verse," to use Cowper's apt phrase. These lighter lyrics of his had the brevity, the brilliancy and the buoyancy which are the specific characteristics of this kind of verse. They had humor and good humor; they often had restrained pathos, suggesting the tear which hangs unfalling above the smile. While it is by his *vers de société* that Bunner made good his place among our lyrists, he was able to prove himself a true poet by verse of a larger purport.

He was also the author of several novels and of several volumes of short-stories. His prose was the prose of a poet, pure and pellucid; his style had both clarity and color. He became a master of the art of the short-story, finding his profit in a loving study of Boccaccio and Maupassant. Even those of his longer tales which stretch out almost

to the dimensions of a novel, were really only short-stories writ large; they had the unity, the swiftness, the singleness of purpose which is the distinguishing characteristic of this form of fiction.

No selection from the masterpieces of the American short-story would be justified that was not enriched by at least one example of Bunner's art, at once firm and delicate. It would matter little whether the choice fell on "Zadoc Pine" or on "Love in Old Cloathes," or on "As One Having Authority." Each of these tales has its own charm and its own fragrance; all of them are models of story-telling; and any one of them can withstand comparison, in its own fashion, with the best in this form of fiction, with any example selected from Hawthorne or Poe, Bret Harte or Cable. They are novel in topic, fresh in atmosphere, individual in treatment and ingenious in construction.

All Bunner's short-stories reveal a fertility of invention playfully delighting in its own exercise. What could be more whimsically adroit and audacious than the open making-up of "A Second-Hand Story," before the eyes of the reader, so to speak, with its weaving of the plot out of whole cloth, as the phrase is. Yet invention is only a minor possession for the writer of fiction unless it

is sustained by the larger interpreting imagination, which only can people a narrative with human beings, vital and unforgettable in the manner that "As One Having Authority" is illumined with the towering figure of the venerable bishop, projected with an intimate understanding of human nature.

While Bunner had sat at the feet of the European masters of fiction to spy out the secrets of the craft, his own subjects were chosen almost without exception from the life of his own country. What could be more intensely American than the narrative of the adventures of Zadoc Pine, with its persuasive portrayal of the man's native gumption, his unvaunting self-respect, his sturdy kindliness? This vision of unmitigated and essential Americanism is set before us in a tale which is also a tract, if we choose so to take it,—a tract setting forth the stern duty of self-help and of resolute independence.

Not only were Bunner's studies from life sketched from our own life here in America; many if not most of them, were also studies of New York, the city of his ancestors and of his own abiding love—although he had not been born in it, nor was he to die in it. Thirty years ago colonialism still lingered in our literature. There were not a

few among us who doubted whether this sprawling metropolis of ours, so varied in its aspects and so tumultuous in its manifestations, would ever prove to be a fertile field for fiction. Here Bunner was truly a pioneer; he drove a furrow of his own in soil scarcely even scratched before he tilled it; and if the later crop is to-day more abundant this is, in some measure, at least, because all can grow the flower now, for all have got the seed.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

March, 1916.

THE STORY OF A NEW YORK HOUSE

I

"I HEAR," said Mrs. Abram Van Riper, seated at her breakfast-table, and watching the morning sunlight dance on the front of the great Burrell house on the opposite side of Pine Street, "that the Dolphs are going to build a prodigious fine house out of town—somewhere up near the Rynders's place."

"And I hear," said Abram Van Riper, laying down last night's *Evening Post,* "that Jacob Dolph is going to give up business. And if he does, it's a disgrace to the town."

It was in the summer of 1807, and Abram Van Riper was getting well over what he considered the meridian line of sixty years. He was hale and hearty; his business was flourishing; his boy was turning out all that should have been expected of one of the Van Riper stock; the refracted sunlight from the walls of the stately house occupied by the Cashier of the Bank of the United States lit with a subdued secondary glimmer the Van Riper silver on the breakfast-table—the squat teapot and slop-bowl, the milk-pitcher, that held a quart, and the

apostle-spoon in the broken loaf-sugar on the Delft plate. Abram Van Riper was decorously happy, as a New York merchant should be. In all other respects, he was pleased to think, he was what a New York merchant should be, and the word of the law and the prophets was fulfilled with him and in his house.

"I'm sure," Mrs. Van Riper began again, somewhat querulously, "I can't see why Jacob Dolph shouldn't give up business, if he's so minded. He's a monstrous fortune, from all I hear—a good hundred thousand dollars."

"A hundred thousand dollars!" repeated her husband, scornfully. "Ay, and twice twenty thousand pounds on the top of that. He's done well, has Dolph. All the more reason he should stick to his trade; and not go to lolling in the sun, like a runner at the Custom-House door. He's not within ten years of me, and here he must build his country house, and set up for the fine gentleman. Jacob Dolph! Did I go on his note, when he came back from France, brave as my master, in '94, or did I not? And where 'ud he have raised twenty thousand in this town, if I hadn't? What's got into folks nowadays? Damn me if I can see!"

His wife protested in wifely fashion. "I'm sure, Van Riper," she began, "you've no need to fly in such a huff if I so much as speak of folks who have some conceit of being genteel. It's only proper pride of Mr. Dolph to have a country house, and——" (her voice faltering a little, timorously) "ride in and—and out——"

"*Ride!*" snorted Mr. Van Riper. "In a carriage, maybe?"

"In a carriage, Van Riper. You may think to ride in a carriage is like being the Pope of Rome; but there's some that knows better. And if you'd set up your carriage," went on the undaunted Mrs. Van Riper, "and gone over to Greenwich Street two years ago, as I'd have had you, and made yourself friendly with those people there, I'd have been on the Orphan Asylum Board at this very minute; and *you* would——"

Mr. Van Riper knew all that speech by heart, in all its variations. He knew perfectly well what it would end in, this time, although he was not a man of quick perception: "He would have been a member of the new Historical Society."

"Yes," he thought to himself, as he found his hat and shuffled out into Pine Street; "and John Pintard would have had my good check in his pocket for his tuppenny society. Pine Street is fine enough for me."

Mr. Van Riper had more cause for his petulancy than he would have acknowledged even to himself. He was a man who had kept his shop open all through Clinton's occupancy and who had had no trouble with the British. And when they had gone he had had to do enough to clear his skirts of any smirch of Toryism, and to implant in his own breast a settled feeling of militant Americanism. He did not like it that the order of things should change—and the order of things was changing. The town was growing out of all knowledge of

itself. Here they had their Orphan Asylum, and their Botanical Garden, and their Historical Society; and the Jews were having it all their own way; and now people were talking of free schools, and of laying out a map for the upper end of the town to grow on, in the "system" of straight streets and avenues. To the devil with systems and avenues! said he. That was all the doing of those cursed Frenchmen. He knew how it would be when they brought their plaguy frigate here in the first fever year—'93—and the fools marched up from Peck's Slip after a red night-cap, and howled their cut-throat song all night long.

It began to hum itself in his head as he walked toward Water Street—*Ça ira—ça ira—les aristocrats à la lanterne.* A whiff of the wind that blew through Paris streets in the terrible times had come across the Atlantic and tickled his dull old Dutch nostrils.

But something worse than this vexed the conservative spirit of Abram Van Riper. He could forgive John Pintard—whose inspiration, I think, foreran the twentieth century—his fancy for free schools and historical societies, as he had forgiven him for his sidewalk-building fifteen years before; he could proudly overlook the fact that the women were busying themselves with all manner of wild charities; he could be contented though he knew that the Hebrew Hart was president of that merchants' club at Baker's, of which he himself would fain have been a member. But there was

something in the air that he could neither forgive nor overlook, nor be contented with.

There was a change coming over the town—a change which he could not clearly define, even in his own mind. There was a great keeping of carriages, he knew. A dozen men had bought carriages, or were likely to buy them at any time. The women were forming societies for the improvement of this and that. And he, who had moved up-town from Dock Street, was now in an old-fashioned quarter. All this he knew, but the something which made him uneasy was more subtile.

Within the last few years he had observed an introduction of certain strange distinctions in the social code of the town. It had been vaguely intimated to him—perhaps by his wife, he could not remember—that there was a difference between his trade and Jacob Dolph's trade. He was a ship-chandler. Jacob Dolph sold timber. Their shops were side by side; Jacob Dolph's rafts lay in the river in front of Abram Van Riper's shop, and Abram Van Riper had gone on Jacob Dolph's note, only a few years ago. Yet, it seemed that it was *genteel* of Jacob Dolph to sell timber, and it was not genteel of Abram Van Riper to be a ship-chandler. There was, then, a difference between Jacob Dolph and Abram Van Riper—a difference which, in forty years, Abram Van Riper had never conceived of. There were folks who held thus. For himself, he could not understand it. What difference there was

between selling the wood to make a ship, and selling the stores to go inside of her, he could not understand.

The town was changing for the worse; he saw that. He did not wish—God forbid!—that his son John should go running about to pleasure-gardens. But it would be no more than neighborly if these young bucks who went out every night should ask him to go with them. Were William Irving's boys and Harry Brevoort and those young Kembles too fine to be friends with his boy? Not that he'd go with them a-rollicking—no, not that—but 'twould be neighborly. It was all wrong, he thought; they were going whither they knew not, and wherefore they knew not; and with that he cursed their airs and their graces, and pounded down to the Tontine, to put his name at the head of the list of those who subscribed for a testimonial service of plate, to be presented to our esteemed fellow-citizen and valued associate, Jacob Dolph, on his retirement from active business.

. . . . . .

Jacob Dolph at this moment was setting forth from his house in State Street, whose pillared balcony, rising from the second floor to the roof, caught a side glance of the morning sun, that loved the Battery far better than Pine Street. He had his little boy by the hand—young Jacob, his miniature, his heir, and the last and only living one of his eight children. Mr. Dolph walked with his stock thrust out and the lower end of his

waistcoat drawn in—he was Colonel Dolph, if he had cared to keep the title; and had come back from Monmouth with a hole in his hip that gave him a bit of a limp, even now in eighteen-hundred-and-seven. He and the boy marched forth like an army with a small but enthusiastic left wing, into the poplar-studded Battery. The wind blew fresh off the bay; the waves beat up against the sea-wall, and swirled with a chuckle under Castle Garden bridge. A large brig was coming up before the wind, all her sails set, as though she were afraid—and she was—of British frigates outside the Hook. Two or three fat little boats, cat-rigged, after the good old New York fashion, were beating down toward Staten Island, to hunt for the earliest blue-fish.

The two Dolphs crossed the Battery, where the elder bowed to his friends among the merchants who lounged about the city's pleasure-ground, lazily chatting over their business affairs. Then they turned up past Bowling Green into Broadway, where Mr. Dolph kept on bowing, for half the town was out, taking the fresh morning for marketing and all manner of shopping. Everybody knew Jacob Dolph afar off by his blue coat with the silver buttons, his nankeen waistcoat, and his red-checked Indian silk neckcloth. He made it a sort of uniform. Captain Beare had brought him a bolt of nankeen and a silk kerchief every year since 1793, when Mr. Dolph gave him credit for the timber of which the *Ursa Minor* was built.

And everybody seemed willing to make

acquaintance with young Jacob's London-made kerseymere breeches, of a bright canary color, and with his lavender silk coat, and with his little *chapeau de Paris.* Indeed, young Jacob was quite the most prominent moving spectacle on Broadway, until they came to John Street, and saw something rolling down the street that quite cut the yellow kerseymeres out of all popular attention.

This was a carriage, the body of which was shaped like a huge section of a cheese, set up on its small end upon broad, swinging straps between two pairs of wheels. It was not unlike a piece of cheese in color, for it was of a dull and faded grayish-green, like mould, relieved by pale-yellow panels and gilt ornaments. It was truly an interesting structure, and it attracted nearly as much notice on Broadway in 1807 as it might to-day. But it was received with far more reverence, for it was a court coach, and it belonged to the Des Anges family, the rich Huguenots of New Rochelle. It had been built in France, thirty years before, and had been sent over as a present to his brother from the Count des Anges, who had himself neglected to make use of his opportunities to embrace the Protestant religion.

When the white-haired old lady who sat in this coach, with a very little girl by her side, saw Mr. Dolph and his son, she leaned out of the window and signalled to the old periwigged driver to stop, and he drew up close to the sidewalk. And then Mr. Dolph and his son came up to the window and

took off their hats, and made a great low bow and a small low bow to the old lady and the little girl.

"Madam Des Anges," said Mr. Dolph, with an idiom which he had learned when he was presented at the court of Louis the Sixteenth, "has surely not driven down from New Rochelle this morning? That would tax even her powers."

Madam Des Anges did not smile—she had no taste for smiling—but she bridled amiably.

"No, Mr. Dolph," she replied; "I have been staying with my daughter-in-law, at her house at King's Bridge, and I have come to town to put my little granddaughter to school. She is to have the privilege of being a pupil of Mme. Dumesnil."

Madam Des Anges indicated the little girl with a slight movement, as though she did not wish to allow the child more consideration than a child deserved. The little girl turned a great pair of awed eyes, first on her grandmother, and then on the gentlemen, and spoke no word. Young Jacob Dolph stared hard at her, and then contemplated his kerseymeres with lazy satisfaction. He had no time for girls. And a boy who had his breeches made in London was a boy of consequence, and need not concern himself about every one he saw.

"And this is your son, I make no doubt," went on Madam Des Anges; "you must bring him to see us at King's Bridge, while we are so near you. These young people should know each other."

Mr. Dolph said he would, and showed a becoming sense of the honor of the invitation; and he made young Jacob say a little speech of thanks,

which he did with a doubtful grace; and then Mr. Dolph sent his compliments to Madam Des Anges' daughter-in-law, and Madam Des Anges sent her compliments to Mrs. Dolph, and there was more stately bowing, and the carriage lumbered on, with the little girl looking timorously out of the window, her great eyes fixed on the yellow kerseymeres, as they twinkled up the street.

"Papa," said young Jacob, as they turned the corner of Ann Street, "when may I go to a boys' school? I'm monstrous big to be at Mrs. Kilmaster's. And I don't like to be a girl-boy."

"Are you a girl-boy?" inquired his father, smiling.

"Aleck Cameron called me one yesterday. He said I was a girl-boy because I went to dame-school. He called me Missy, too!" the boy went on, with his breast swelling.

"We'll see about it," said Mr. Dolph, smiling again; and they walked on in silence to Mrs. Kilmaster's door, where he struck the knocker, and a neat mulatto girl opened the narrow door. Then he patted his boy on the head and bade him good-by for the morning, and told him to be a good boy at school. He took a step or two and looked back. Young Jacob lingered on the step, as if he had a further communication to make. He paused.

"I thumped him," said young Jacob, and the narrow door swallowed him up.

Mr. Dolph continued on his walk up Broadway. As he passed the upper end of the Common he looked with interest at the piles of red sandstone

among the piles of white marble, where they were building the new City Hall. The Council had ordered that the rear or northward end of the edifice should be constructed of red stone; because red stone was cheap, and none but a few suburbans would ever look down on it from above Chambers Street. Mr. Dolph shook his head. He thought he knew better. He had watched the growth of trade; he knew the room for further growth; he had noticed the long converging lines of river-front, with their unbounded accommodation for wharves and slips. He believed that the day would come—and his own boy might see it—when the business of the city would crowd the dwelling-houses from the river side, east and west, as far, maybe, as Chambers Street. He had no doubt that the boy might find himself, forty years from then, in a populous and genteel neighborhood. Perhaps he foresaw too much; but he had a jealous yearning for a house that should be a home for him, and for his child, and for his grandchildren. He wanted a place where his wife might have a garden; a place which the boy would grow up to love and cherish, where the boy might bring a wife some day. And even if it were a little out of town—why, his wife did not want a rout every night; and it was likely his old friends would come out and see him once in a while, and smoke a pipe in his garden and eat a dish of strawberries, perhaps.

As he thought it all over for the hundredth time, weighing for and against in his gentle and

deliberative mind, he strolled far out of town. There was a house here and there on the road—a house with a trim, stiff little garden, full of pink and white and blue flowers in orderly, clam-shell-bordered beds. But it was certainly, he had to admit, as he looked about him, very *countrified* indeed. It seemed that the city must lose itself if it wandered up here among these rolling meadows and wooded hills. Yet even up here, half way to Greenwich Village, there were little outposts of the town—clumps of neighborly houses, mostly of the poorer class, huddling together to form small nuclei for sporadic growth. There was one on his right, near the head of Collect Street. Perhaps that quizzical little old German was right, who had told him that King's Bridge property was a rational investment.

He went across the hill where Grand Street crosses Broadway, and up past what was then North and is to-day Houston Street, and then turned down a straggling road that ran east and west. He walked toward the Hudson, and passed a farmhouse or two, and came to a bare place where there were no trees, and only a few tangled bushes and ground-vines.

Here a man was sitting on a stone, awaiting him. As he came near, the man arose.

"Ah, it's you, Weeks? And have you the plan?"

"Yes, Colonel—Mr. Dolph. I've put the window where you want it—that is, my brother Levi did—though I don't see as you're going to have

much trouble in looking over anything that's likely to come between you and the river."

Mr. Dolph took the crisp roll of parchment and studied it with loving interest. It had gone back to Ezra Weeks, the builder, and his brother Levi, the architect, for the twentieth time, perhaps. Was there ever an architect's plan put in the hands of a happy nest-builder where the windows did not go up and down from day to day, and the doors did not crawl all around the house, and the veranda did not contract and expand like a sensitive plant; or where the rooms and closets and corridors did not march backward and forward and in and out at the bidding of every fond, untutored whim?

"It's a monstrous great big place for a country-house, Mr. Dolph," said Ezra Weeks, as he looked over Jacob Dolph's shoulder at the drawings of the house, and shook his head with a sort of pitying admiration for the projector's audacity.

They talked for a while, and looked at the site as if they might see more in it than they saw yesterday, and then Weeks set off for the city, pledged to hire laborers and to begin the work on the morrow.

"I think I can get you some of that stone that's going into the back of the City Hall, if you say so, Mr. Dolph. That stone was bought cheap, you know—bought for the city."

"See what you can do, Weeks," said Mr. Dolph; and Mr. Weeks went whistling down the road.

Jacob Dolph walked around his prospective

domain. He kicked a wild blackberry bush aside, to look at the head of a stake, and tried to realize that that would be the corner of his house. He went to where the parlor fireplace would be, and stared at the grass and stones, wondering what it would be like to watch the fire flickering on the new hearth. Then he looked over toward the Hudson, and saw the green woods on Union Hill and the top of a white sail over the high river-bank. He hoped that no one would build a large house between him and the river.

He lingered so long that the smoke of midday dinners was arising from Greenwich Village when he turned back toward town. When he reached the Commons on his homeward way he came across a knot of idlers who were wasting the hour of the noontide meal in gaping at the unfinished municipal building.

They were admiringly critical. One man was vociferously enthusiastic.

"It's a marvellous fine building, say I, sir! Worthy of the classic shades of antiquity. If Europe can show a finer than that will be when she's done, then, in *my* opinion, sir, Europe is doing well."

"You admire the architecture, Mr. Huggins?" asked Mr. Dolph, coming up behind him. Mr. Huggins turned around, slightly disconcerted, and assumed an amiability of manner such as can only be a professional acquirement among us poor creatures of human nature.

"Ah, Mr. Dolph—Colonel, I should say! I

have purposed to do myself the honor of presenting myself at your house this afternoon, Colonel Dolph, to inquire if you did not desire to have your peruke *frisée.* For I had taken the liberty of observing you in conversation with Madam Des Anges this morning, in her equipage, and it had occurred to me that possibly the madam might be a-staying with you."

"Madam Des Anges does not honor my house this time, Huggins," returned Mr. Dolph, with an indulgent little laugh; "and my poor old peruke will do very well for to-day."

There was a perceptible diminution in Mr. Huggins's ardor; but he was still suave.

"I hope the madam is in good health," he remarked.

"She is, I believe," said Mr. Dolph.

"And your good lady, sir? I have not had the pleasure of treating Mrs. Dolph professionally for some time, sir, I——"

Mr. Dolph was wary. "I don't think Mrs. Dolph is fond of the latest modes, Huggins. But here comes Mr. Van Riper. Perhaps he will have his peruke *frisée.*"

Mr. Huggins got out of a dancing-master's pose with intelligent alacrity, bade Mr. Dolph a hasty "Good-afternoon!" and hurried off toward his shop, one door above Wall Street. Mr. Van Riper did not like "John Richard Desbrosses Huggins, Knight of the Comb."

There was something else that Mr. Van Riper did not like.

"Hullo, Dolph!" he hailed his friend. "What's this I hear about you building a preposterous tom-fool of a town-house out by Greenwich? Why don't you hire that house that Burr had, up near Lispenard's cow-pasture, and be done with it?"

Mr. Dolph seized his chance.

"It's not so preposterous as all that. By the way, talking of Burr, I hear from Richmond that he'll positively be tried next week. Did you know that young Irving—William's son, the youngest, the lad that writes squibs—has gone to Richmond for the defence?"

"William Irving's son might be in better business," grunted Mr. Van Riper, for a moment diverted. "If we'd got at that devil when he murdered poor Hamilton—'fore gad, we'd have saved the trouble of trying him. Do you remember when we was for going to Philadelphia after him, and there the sly scamp was at home all the time up in his fine house, a-sitting in a tub of water, reading French stuff, as cool as a cowcumber, with the whole town hunting for him?" Then he came back. "But that house of yours. You haven't got this crazy notion that New York's going to turn into London while you smoke your pipe, have you? You're keeping some of your seven business senses, ain't you?"

"I don't know," Mr. Dolph mildly defended his hobby; "there is a great potentiality of growth in this city. Here's an estimate that John Pintard made the other day——"

"John Pintard! He's another like *you!*" said Mr. Van Riper.

"Well, look at it for yourself," pleaded the believer in New York's future.

Mr. Van Riper took the neatly written paper, and simply snorted and gasped as he read this:

Statistical.

By the numeration of the inhabitants of this city, recently published, the progress of population for the last 5 years appears to be at the rate of 25 per cent. Should our city continue to increase in the same proportion during the present century, the aggregate number at its close will far exceed that of any other city in the Old World, Pekin not excepted, as will appear from the following table. Progress of population in the city of New York, computed at the rate of 25 per cent. every 5 years:

1805	75,770	1855	705,650
1810	95,715	1860	882,062
1815	110,390	1865	1,102,577
1820	147,987	1870	1,378,221
1825	184,923	1875	1,722,776
1830	231,228	1880	2,153,470
1835	289,035	1885	2,691,837
1840	361,293	1890	3,364,796
1845	451,616	1895	4,205,995
1850	564,520	1900	5,257,493

When he had read it through he was a-quivering, crimson with that rage of Conservative indignation which is even more fervent than the flames of Radical enthusiasm.

"Yes," he said, "there's seventy-five thousand people in this town, and there'll be seventy-five thousand bankrupts if this lunacy goes on. And there's seventy-five thousand maggots in your brain, and seventy-five thousand in John Pintard's; and if you two live to see nineteen hundred,

you'll have twice five million two hundred and fifty-seven thousand four hundred and ninety-three—whatever that may be!" And he thrust the paper back at Jacob Dolph, and made for the Tontine and the society of sensible men.

. . . . . .

The house was built, in spite of Abram Van Riper's remonstrance. It had a stone front, almost flush with the road, and brick gable-ends, in each one of which, high up near the roof, stood an arched window, to lift an eyebrow to the sun, morning and evening. But it was only a country-house, after all; and the Dolphs set up their carriage and drove out and in, from June to September.

There was a garden at the side, where Mrs. Dolph could have the flowers her heart had yearned after ever since Jacob Dolph brought her from her home at Rondout, when she was seventeen.

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Strengthened by the country air—so they said—young Jacob grew clean out of his dame-school days and into and out of Columbia College, and was sent abroad, a sturdy youth, to have a year's holiday. It was to the new house that he came back the next summer, with a wonderful stock of fine clothes and of finer manners, and with a pair of mustaches that scandalized everybody but Madam Des Anges, who had seen the like in France when she visited her brother. And a very

fine young buck was young Jacob, altogether, with his knowledge of French and his ignorance of Dutch, and a way he had with the women, and another way he had with the men, and his heirship to old Jacob Dolph's money and his two houses.

For they stayed in the old house until 1822.

. . . . . .

It was a close, hot night in the early summer; there was a thick, warm mist that turned now and then into a soft rain; yet every window in the Dolphs' house on State Street was closed.

It had been a hideous day for New York. From early morning until long after dark had set in, the streets had been filled with frightened, disordered crowds. The city was again stricken with the old, inevitable, ever-recurring scourge of yellow fever, and the people had lost their heads. In every house, in every office and shop, there was hasty packing, mad confusion, and wild flight. It was only a question of getting out of town as best one might. Wagons and carts creaked and rumbled and rattled through every street, piled high with household chattels, up-heaped in blind haste. Women rode on the swaying loads, or walked beside with the smaller children in their arms. Men bore heavy burdens, and children helped according to their strength. There was only one idea, and that was flight—from a pestilence whose coming might have been prevented, and whose course could have been stayed. To most of these poor creatures the only haven seemed to be Green-

wich Village; but some sought the scattered settlements above; some crossed to Hoboken; some to Bushwick; while others made a long journey to Staten Island, across the bay. And when they reached their goals, it was to beg or buy lodgings anywhere and anyhow; to sleep in cellars and garrets, in barns and stables.

The panic was not only among the poor and ignorant. Merchants were moving their offices, and even the Post Office and the Custom House were to be transferred to Greenwich. There were some who remained faithful throughout all, and who labored for the stricken, and whose names are not even written in the memory of their fellowmen. But the city had been so often ravaged before, that at the first sight there was one mere animal impulse of flight that seized upon all alike.

At one o'clock, when some of the better streets had once more taken on their natural quiet, an ox-cart stood before the door of the Dolphs' old house. A little behind it stood the family carriage, its lamps unlit. The horses stirred uneasily, but the oxen waited in dull, indifferent patience. Presently the door opened, and two men came out and awkwardly bore a plain coffin to the cart. Then they mounted to the front of the cart, hiding between them a muffled lantern. They wore cloths over the lower part of their faces, and felt hats drawn low over their eyes. Something in their gait showed them to be seafaring men, or the like.

Then out of the open door came Jacob Dolph,

moving with a feeble shuffle between his son and his old negro coachman—this man and his wife the only faithful of all the servants. The young man put his father in the carriage, and the negro went back and locked the doors and brought the keys to his young master. He mounted to the box, and through the darkness could be seen a white towel tied around his arm—the old badge of servitude's mourning.

The oxen were started up, and the two vehicles moved up into Broadway. They travelled with painful slowness; the horses had to be held in to keep them behind the cart, for the oxen could be only guided by the whip, and not by word of mouth. The old man moaned a little at the pace, and quivered when he heard the distant sound of hammers.

"What is it?" he asked, nervously.

"They are boarding up some of the streets," said his son; "do not fear, father. Everything is prepared; and if we make no noise, we shall not be troubled."

"If we can only keep her out of the Potter's Field—the Potter's Field!" cried the father; "I'll thank God—I'll ask no more—I'll ask no more!"

And then he broke down and cried a little, feebly, and got his son's hand in the darkness and put on his own shoulder.

It was nearly two when they came to St. Paul's and turned the corner to the gate. It was dark below, but some frenzied fools were burning tar-barrels far down Ann Street, and the light flick-

ered on the top of the church spire. They crossed the churchyard to where a shallow grave had been dug, half way down the hill. The men lowered the body into it; the old negro gave them a little *rouleau* of coin, and they went hurriedly away into the night.

The clergyman came out by and by, with the sexton behind him. He stood high up above the grave, and drew his long cloak about him and lifted an old pomander-box to his face. He was not more foolish than his fellows; in that evil hour men took to charms and to saying of spells. Below the grave and apart, for the curse rested upon them, too, stood Jacob Dolph and his son, the old man leaning on the arm of the younger. Then the clergyman began to read the service for the burial of the dead, over the departed sister—and wife and mother. He spoke low; but his voice seemed to echo in the stillness. He came forward with a certain shrinking, and cast the handful of dust and ashes into the grave. When it was done, the sexton stepped forward and rapidly threw in the earth until he had filled the little hollow even with the ground. Then, with fearful precaution, he laid down the carefully cut sods, and smoothed them until there was no sign of what had been done. The clergyman turned to the two mourners, without moving nearer to them, and lifted up his hands. The old man tried to kneel; but his son held him up, for he was too feeble, and they bent their heads for a moment of silence. The clergyman went away as he had come; and Jacob Dolph

and his son went back to the carriage. When his father was seated, young Jacob said to the coachman: "To the new house."

The heavy coach swung into Broadway, and climbed up the hill out into the open country. There were lights still burning in the farmhouses, bright gleams to east and west, but the silence of the damp summer night hung over the sparse suburbs, and the darkness seemed to grow more intense as they drove away from the city. The trees by the roadside were almost black in the gray mist; the raw, moist smell of the night, the damp air, chilly upon the high land, came in through the carriage windows. Young Jacob looked out and noted their progress by familiar landmarks on the road, but the old man sat with his head bent on his new black stock.

It was almost three, and the east was beginning to look dark, as though a storm were settling there in the grayness, when they turned down the straggling street and drew up before the great dark mass that was the new house. The carriage-wheels gritted against the loose stones at the edge of the roadway, and the great door of the house swung open. The light of one wavering candle-flame, held high above her head, fell on the black face of old Chloe, the coachman's wife. There were no candles burning on the high-pitched stairway; all was dark behind her in the empty house.

Young Jacob Dolph helped his father to the ground, and between the young man and the negro old Jacob Dolph wearily climbed the steps. Chloe

lifted her apron to her face, and turned to lead them up the stair. Her husband went out to his horses, shutting the door softly after him, between Jacob Dolph's old life and the new life that was to begin in the new house.

II

WHEN young Jacob Dolph came down to breakfast the next morning he found his father waiting for him in the breakfast-room. The meal was upon the table. Old Chloe stood with her black hands folded upon her white apron, and her pathetic negro eyes following the old gentleman as he moved wistfully about the room.

Father and son shook hands in silence, and turned to the table. There were three chairs in their accustomed places. They hesitated a half-second, looking at the third great armchair, as though they waited for the mistress of the house to take her place. Then they sat down. It was six years before any one took that third chair, but every morning Jacob Dolph the elder made that little pause before he put himself at the foot of the table.

On this first morning there was very little said and very little eaten. But when they had made an end of sitting at the table old Jacob Dolph said, with something almost like testiness in his husky voice:

"Jacob, I want to sell the house."

"Father!"

"The old house, I mean; I shall never go back there."

His son looked at him with a further inquiry. He felt a sudden new apprehension. The father sat back in his easy-chair, drumming on the arms with nervous fingers.

"I shall never go back there," he said again.

"Of course you know best, sir," said young Jacob, gently; "but would it be well to be precipitate? It is possible that you may feel differently some time——"

"There is no 'some time' for me!" broke in the old man, gripping the chair-arms, fiercely; "my time's done—done, sir!"

Then his voice broke and became plaintively kind.

"There, there! Forgive me, Jacob, boy. But it's true, my boy, true. The world's done, for me; but there's a world ahead for you, my son, thank God! I'll be patient—I'll be patient. God has been good to me, and I haven't many years to wait, in the course of nature."

He looked vacantly out of the window, trying to see the unforeseen with his mental sight.

"While I'm here, Jacob, let the old man have his way. It's a whimsey; I doubt 'tis hardly rational. But I have no heart to go home. Let me learn to live my life here. 'Twill be easier."

"But do you think it necessary to sell, sir? Could you not hold the house? Are you certain that you would like to have a stranger living there?"

"I care not a pin who lives within those four walls now, sir!" cried the elder, with a momentary return of his vehemence. "It's no house to me now. Sell it, sir, sell it!—if there's any one will give money for it at a time like this. Bring every stick of furniture and every stitch of carpet up here; and let me have my way, Jacob—it won't be for long."

He got up and went blindly out of the room, and his son heard him muttering, "Not for long—not for long, now," as he wandered about the house and went aimlessly into room after room.

Old Jacob Dolph had always been an indulgent parent, and none kinder ever lived. But we should hardly call him indulgent to-day. Good as he was to his boy, it had always been with the goodness of a superior. It was the way of his time. A half-century ago the child's position was equivocal. He lived by the grace of God and his parents, and their duty to him was rather a duty to society, born of an abstract morality. Love was given him, not as a right, but as an indulgence. And young Jacob Dolph, in all his grief and anxiety, was guiltily conscious of a secret thrill of pleasure—natural enough, poor boy—in his sudden elevation to the full dignity of manhood, and his father's abdication of the headship of the house.

A little later in the day, urged again by the old gentleman, he put on his hat and went to see Abram Van Riper. Mr. Van Riper was now, despite his objections to the pernicious institution

of country-houses, a near neighbor of the Dolphs. He had yielded, not to fashion, but to yellow fever, and at the very first of the outbreak had bought a house on the outskirts of Greenwich Village, and had moved there in unseemly haste. He had also registered an unnecessarily profane oath that he would never again live within the city limits.

When young Jacob Dolph came in front of the low, hip-roofed house, whose lower story of undressed stone shone with fresh whitewash, Mr. Van Riper stood on his stoop and checked his guest at the front gate, a dozen yards away. From this distance he jabbed his big gold-headed cane toward the young man, as though to keep him off.

"Stay there, sir—you, sir, you Jacob Dolph!" he roared, brandishing the big stick. "Stand back, I tell you! Don't come in, sir! Good-day, sir—good-day, good-day, good-day!" (This hurried excursus was in deference to a sense of social duty.) "Keep away, confound you, keep away—consume your body, sir, stay where you are!"

"I'm not coming any nearer, Mr. Van Riper," said Jacob Dolph, with a smile which he could not help.

"I can't have you in here, sir," went on Mr. Van Riper, with no abatement of his agitation. "I don't want to be inhospitable; but I've got a wife and a son, sir, and you're infectious—damn it, sir, you're infectious!"

"I'll stay where I am, Mr. Van Riper," said

young Jacob, smiling again. "I only came with a message from my father."

"With a what?" screamed Mr. Van Riper. "I can't have—oh, ay, a message! Well, say it then and be off, like a sensible youngster. Consume it, man, can't you talk farther out in the street?"

When Mr. Van Riper learned his visitor's message, he flung his stick on the white pebbles of the clam-shell-bordered path, and swore that he, Van Riper, was the only sane man in a city of lunatics, and that if Jacob Dolph tried to carry out his plan he should be shipped straightway to Bloomingdale.

But young Jacob had something of his father's patience, and, despite the publicity of the interview, he contrived to make Mr. Van Riper understand how matters stood. To tell the truth, Van Riper grew quite sober and manageable when he realized that his extravagant imputation of insanity was not so wide of the mark as it might have seemed, and that there was a possibility that his old friend's mind might be growing weak. He even ventured a little way down the path and permitted Jacob to come to the gate while they discussed the situation.

"Poor old Dolph—poor old Jacob!" he groaned. "We must keep him out of the hands of the sharks, that we must!" He did not see young Jacob's irrepressible smile at this singular extension of metaphor. "He mustn't be allowed to sell that house in open market—never, sir! Confound it, I'll buy it myself before I'll see him fleeced!"

In the end he agreed, on certain strict conditions of precaution, to see young Jacob the next day and discuss ways and means to save the property.

"Come here, sir, at ten, and I'll see you in the sitting-room, and we'll find out what we can do for your father—curse it, it makes me feel bad; by gad, it does! Ten to-morrow, then—and come fumigated, young man, don't you forget that—come fumigated, sir!"

It was Van Riper who bought the property at last. He paid eighteen thousand dollars for it. This was much less than its value; but it was more than any one else would have given just at that time, and it was all that Van Riper could afford. The transaction weighed on the purchaser's mind, however. He had bought the house solely out of kindness, at some momentary inconvenience to himself; and yet it looked as though he were taking advantage of his friend's weakness. Abram Van Riper was a man who cultivated a clear conscience, of a plain, old-fashioned sort, and the necessity for self-examination was novel and disagreeable to him.

. . . . . .

Life lived itself out at Jacob Dolph's new house whether he liked it or not The furniture came up-town, and was somewhat awkwardly disposed about its new quarters; and in this unhomelike combination of two homes old Mr. Dolph sat himself down to finish his stint of life. He awoke each morning and found that twenty-four hours of

sleep and waking lay before him, to be got through in their regular order, just as they were lived through by men who had an interest in living. He went to bed every night, and crossed off one from a tale of days of which he could not know the length.

Of course his son, in some measure, saved his existence from emptiness. He was proud of young Jacob—fond and proud. He looked upon him as a prince of men, which he was, indeed. He trusted absolutely in the young man, and his trust was well placed. And he knew that his boy loved him. But he had an old man's sad consciousness that he was not necessary to Jacob—that he was an adjunct, at the best, not an integral part of this younger existence. He saw Jacob the younger gradually recovering from his grief for the mother who had left them; and he knew that even so would Jacob some day recover from grief when his father should have gone.

He saw this; but it is doubtful if he felt it acutely. Nature was gradually dulling his sensibilities with that wonderful anæsthetic of hers, which is so much kinder to the patient than it is to his watching friends. After the first wild freak of selling the house, he showed, for a long time, no marked signs of mental impairment, beyond his lack of interest in the things which he had once cared about—even in the growth of the city he loved. And in a lonely and unoccupied man, sixty-five years of age, this was not unnatural. It was not unnatural, even, if now and then he was

whimsical, and took odd fancies and prejudices. But nevertheless the work was going on within his brain, little by little, day by day.

He settled his life into an almost mechanical routine, of which the most active part was his daily walk down into the city. At first he would not go beyond St. Paul's churchyard; but after awhile he began to take timorous strolls among the old business streets where his life had been passed. He would drop into the offices of his old friends, and would read the market reports with a pretence of great interest, and then he would fold up his spectacles and put them in their worn leather case, and walk slowly out. He was always pleased when one of the younger clerks bowed to him and said, "Good-day, Mr. Dolph!"

It was in the fourth year of his widowhood that he bethought himself of young Jacob's need of a more liberal social life than he had been leading. The boy went about enough; he was a good deal of a beau, so his father heard; and there was no desirable house in the town that did not welcome handsome, amiable young Dolph. But he showed no signs of taking a wife unto himself, and in those days the bachelor had only a provisional status in society. He was expected to wed, and the whole circle of his friends chorused yearly a deeper regret for the lost sheep, as time made that detestable thing, an "old bachelor," of him.

Young Jacob was receiving many courtesies and was making no adequate return. He felt it himself, but he was too tender of his father's change-

less grief to urge him to open the great empty house to their friends. The father, however, felt that it was his duty to sacrifice his own desire for solitude, and, when the winter of 1825 brought home the city's wandering children—there were not so many of the wandering sort in 1825—he insisted that young Jacob should give a dinner to his friends among the gay young bachelors. That would be a beginning; and if all went well they would have an old maiden aunt from Philadelphia to spend the winter with them, and help them to give the dinner parties which do not encourage bachelorhood, but rather convert and reform the coy celibate.

The news went rapidly through the town. The Dolph hospitality had been famous, and this was taken for a signal that the Dolph doors were to open again. There was great excitement in Hudson Street and St. John's Park. Maidens, bending over their tambour-frames, working secret hopes and aspirations in with their blossoming silks and worsted, blushed, with faint speculative smiles, as they thought of the vast social possibilities of the mistress of the grand Dolph house. Young bachelors, and old bachelors, too, rolled memories of the Dolph Madeira over longing tongues.

The Dolph cellar, too, had been famous, and just at that period New Yorkers had a fine and fanciful taste in wine, if they had any self-respect whatever.

I think it must have been about then that Mr.

Dominick Lynch began his missionary labors among the smokers and drinkers of this city; he who bought a vineyard in France and the Vuelta Abajo plantations in Cuba, solely to teach the people of his beloved New York what was the positively proper thing in wines and cigars. If it was not then, it could not have been much later that Mr. Dolph had got accustomed to receiving, every now and then, an unordered and unexpected consignment of wines or Havana cigars, sent up from Little Dock Street—or what we call Water Street now, the lower end of it. And I am sure that he paid Mr. Lynch's bill with glowing pride; for Mr. Lynch extended the evangelizing hand of culture to none but those of pre-eminent social position.

It was to be quite a large dinner; but it was noticeable that none of the young men who were invited had engagements of regrettable priority.

Jacob Dolph the elder looked more interested in life than he had looked in four years when he stood on the hearthrug in the drawing-room and received his son's guests. He was a bold figure among all the young men, not only because he was tall and white-haired, and for the moment erect, and of a noble and gracious cast of countenance, but because he clung to his old style of dress—his knee-breeches and silk stockings, and his long coat, black, for this great occasion, but of the "shad-belly" pattern. He wore his high black stock, too, and his snow-white hair was gathered behind into a loose peruke.

The young men wore trousers, or pantaloons, as they mostly called them, strapped under their varnished boots. Their coats were cut like our dress-coats, if you can fancy them with a wild amplitude of collar and lapel. They wore large cravats and gaudy waistcoats, and two or three of them who had been too much in England came with shawls or rugs around their shoulders.

They were a fashionable lot of people, and this was a late dinner, so they sat down at six o'clock in the great dining-room—not the little breakfast-room—with old Jacob Dolph at one end of the table and young Jacob Dolph at the other.

It was a pleasant dinner, and the wine was good, and the company duly appreciative, although individually critical.

Old Jacob Dolph had on his right an agreeable French count, just arrived in New York, who was creating a *furor;* and on his left was Mr. Philip Waters, the oldest of the young men, who, being thirty-five, had a certain consideration for old age. But old Jacob Dolph was not quite at his ease. He did not understand the remarkable decorum of the young men. He himself belonged to the age of "bumpers and no heel-taps," and nobody at his board to-night seemed to care about drinking bumpers, even out of the poor, little, new-fangled claret-glasses, that held only a thimbleful apiece. He had never known a lot of gentlemen, all by themselves, to be so discreet. Before the evening was over he became aware of the fact that he was

the only man who was proposing toasts, and then he proposed no more.

Things had changed since he was a young buck, and gave bachelor parties. Why, he could remember seeing his own good father—an irreproachable gentleman, surely—lock the door of his dining-room on the inside—ay, at just such a dinner as this—and swear that no guest of his should go out of that room sober. And his word had been kept. Times were changing. He thought, somehow, that these young men needed more good port in their veins.

Toward the end of the festivities he grew silent. He gave no more toasts, and drank no more bumpers, although he might safely have put another bottle or two under his broad waistcoat. But he leaned back in his chair, and rested one hand on the table, playing with his wineglass in an absent-minded way. There was a vague smile on his face; but every now and then he knit his heavy gray brows as if he were trying to work out some problem of memory. Mr. Philip Waters and the French count were talking across him; he had been in the conversation, but he had dropped out some time before. At last he rose, with his brows knit, and pulled out his huge watch, and looked at its face. Everybody turned toward him, and, at the other end of the table, his son half rose to his feet. He put the watch back in his pocket, and said, in his clear, deep voice: "Gentlemen, I think we will rejoin the ladies."

There was a little impulsive stir around the

table, and then he seemed to understand that he had wandered, and a frightened look came over his face. He tottered backward, and swayed from side to side. Mr. Philip Waters and the Frenchman had their arms behind him before he could fall, and in a second or two he had straightened himself up. He made a stately, tremulous apology for what he called his "infelicitous absence of mind," and then he marched off to bed by himself, suffering no one to go with him.

A little while later in the evening, Mr. Philip Waters, walking down Broadway (which thoroughfare was getting to have a fairly suburban look), informed the French count that in his, Mr. Waters's, opinion, young Jacob Dolph would own that house before long.

Young Jacob Dolph's father insisted on repetitions of the bachelor dinner, but he never again appeared in the great dining-room. When there was a stag-party he took his own simple dinner at five o'clock and went to bed early, and lay awake until his son had dismissed the last mild reveller, and he could hear the light, firm, young footstep mounting the stairs to the bedroom door opposite his own.

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That was practically the end of it for old Jacob Dolph. The maiden aunt, who had been invited, was notified that she could not come, for Mr. Dolph was not well enough to open his house that winter. But it was delicately intimated to her that if he grew worse she might still be sent for, and that

alleviated her natural disappointment. She liked to give parties; but there is also a chastened joy for some people in being at the head of a house of mourning.

Old Mr. Dolph grew no worse physically, except that he was inclined to make his daily walks shorter, and that he grew fonder of sitting at home in the little breakfast-room, where the sun shone almost all day long, and where Mrs. Dolph had once been fond of coming to sew. Her little square work-table of mahogany stood there still. There the old gentleman liked to dine, and often he dined alone. Young Jacob was in great demand all over town, and his father knew that he ought to go out and amuse himself. And the young man, although he was kind and loving, and never negligent in any office of respect or affection, had that strong youth in him which makes it impossible to sit every day of the week opposite an old man whose world had slipped by him, who knew nothing of youth except to love it and wonder at it.

In the morning, before he went out for his daily tramp into town, old Jacob would say to young Jacob:

"I suppose I shall see you at dinner, my boy?"

And young Jacob would say, "Yes, sir," or "No, sir, I think not. Mrs. Des Anges was in town yesterday, and she asked me to ride up there to-day and dine. And Diana" (Diana was his big black mare) "needs a little work; she's getting badly out of condition. So, if it doesn't matter to

you, sir, I'll just run up there and get back before the moon sets."

And the father would answer that it didn't matter, and would send his best respects, through Mrs. Des Anges at King's Bridge, to Madam Des Anges at New Rochelle; and at night he would sit down alone to his dinner in the breakfast-room, served by old Chloe, who did her humble best to tempt his appetite, which was likely to be feeble when Master Jacob was away.

Master Jacob had taken to riding to King's Bridge of late. Sometimes he would start out early in the morning, just about the time when young Van Riper was plodding by on his way to the shop. Young Van Riper liked to be at the shop an hour earlier than his father. Old Mr. Dolph was always up, on these occasions, to see his son start off. He loved to look at the boy, in his English riding-boots and breeches, astride of black Diana, who pranced and curvetted up the unpaved road. Young Jacob had her well in hand, but he gave her her head and let her play until they reached Broadway, where he made her strike a rattling regular pace until they got well up the road; and then she might walk up Bloomingdale way or across to Hickory Lane.

If he went up by the east he was likely to dismount at a place which you can see now, a little west and south of McComb's Dam Bridge, where there is a bit of rocky hollow, and a sort of horizontal cleft in the rocks that has been called a cave,

and a water-washed stone above, whose oddly shaped depression is called an Indian's footprint. He would stop there, because right in that hollow, as I can tell you myself, grew, in his time as in mine, the first of the spring flowers. It was full of violets once, carpeted fairly with the pale, delicate petals.

And up toward the west, on a bridle-path between the hills and the river, as you came toward Fort Washington, going to Tubby Hook—we are refined nowadays, and Tubby Hook is "Inwood"—Heaven help it!—there were wonderful flowers in the woods. The wind-flowers came there early, nestling under the gray rocks that sparkled with garnets; and there bloomed great bunches of Dutchman's-breeches—not the thin sprays that come in the late New England spring, but huge clumps that two men could not enclose with linked hands; great masses of scarlet and purple, and—mostly—of a waxy white, with something deathlike in their translucent beauty. There, also, he would wade into the swamps around a certain little creek, lured by a hope of the jack-in-the-pulpit, to find only the odorous and disappointing skunk-cabbage. And there the woods were full of the aroma of sassafras, and of birch tapped by the earliest woodpecker, whose drumming throbbed through the young man's deep and tender musing.

And—strange enough for a young man who rides only to exercise his black mare—he never came out of those woods without an armful of

columbine or the like. And—strange enough for any young man in this world of strange things—when he sat down at the table of Mrs. Des Anges, in her pleasant house near Harlem Creek, Miss Aline Des Anges wore a bunch of these columbines at her throat. Miss Aline Des Anges was a slim girl, not very tall, with great dark eyes that followed some people with a patient wistfulness.

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One afternoon, in May of 1827, young Jacob found his father in the breakfast-room, and said to him:

"Father, I am going to marry Aline Des Anges."

His father, who had been dozing in the sun by the south window, raised his eyes to his son's face with a kindly, blank look, and said, thoughtfully:

"Des Anges. That's a good family, Jacob, and a wonderful woman, Madam Des Anges. Is she alive yet?"

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When Madam Des Anges, eighty years old, and strong and well, heard of this, she said:

"It is the etiquette of France that one family should make the proposition to the other family. Under the circumstances *I* will be the family that proposes. I will make a precedent. The Des Anges make precedents."

And she rode down to the Dolph house in the family carriage—the last time it ever went out—and made her "proposition" to Jacob Dolph the

elder, and he brightened up most wonderfully, until you would have thought him quite his old self, and he told her what an honor he esteemed the alliance, and paid her compliments a hundred words long.

And in May of the next year, King's Bridge being out of the question, and etiquette being waived at the universal demand of society, the young couple stood up in the drawing-room of the Dolph house to be wed.

The ceremony was fashionably late—seven o'clock in the evening. And after it was over, and the young couple had digested what St. Paul had to say about the ordinance of wedlock, and had inaudibly promised to do and be whatever the domine required of them, they were led by the half-dozen groomsmen to the long glass between the front windows, and made to stand up there, with their faces toward the company, and to receive the congratulations of a mighty procession of friends, who all used the same formulas, except the very old ones, who were delicately indelicate.

The bridegroom wore a blue coat and trousers, and a white satin waistcoat embroidered with silver-thread roses and lilies-of-the-valley. The coat was lined with cream-colored satin, quilted in a most elaborate pattern; and his necktie was of satin, too, with embroidered ends. His shirt was a miracle of fine linen. As to the bride, she was in white satin and lace, and at her throat she wore a little bunch of late white columbines, for which

Mr. Jacob Dolph the younger had scoured the woods near Fort Washington.

There was to be a grand supper, later; and the time of waiting was filled up with fashionable conversation.

That dear old doctor, who was then a dear young doctor, and whose fine snow-crowned face stood in later years as an outward and visible sign of all that was brave, kindly, self-sacrificing, and benevolent in the art of healing, was seated by Madam Des Anges, and was telling her, in stately phrase, suited to his auditor, of a certain case of heroism with which he had met in the course of his practice. Mr. Blank, it appeared, had been bitten by a dog that was supposed to be possessed by the rabies. For months he had suffered the agonies of mental suspense and of repeated cauterizing of the flesh, and during those months had concealed his case from his wife, that he might spare her pain—suffering in silence enough to unnerve most men.

"It was heroic," said Dr. F.

Madam Des Anges bowed her gray head approvingly.

"I think," she said, "his conduct shows him to be a man of taste. Had he informed his wife of his condition, she might have experienced the most annoying solicitude; and I am informed that she is a person of feeble character."

The doctor looked at her, and then down at the floor; and then he asked her if she did not hope that Almaviva Lynch would bring Garcia back

again, with that marvellous Italian opera, which, as he justly observed, captivated the eye, charmed the ear, and awakened the profoundest emotions of the heart.

And at that Madam Des Anges showed some animation, and responded that she had listened to some pleasing operas in Paris; but she did not know that they were of Italian origin.

But if Madam Des Anges was surprised to learn that any good thing could come out of any other country than France, there was another surprise in store for her, and it did not long impend.

It was only a little while after this that her grandson-in-law, finding her on his right and Abram Van Riper on his left—he had served out his time as a statue in front of the mirror—thought it proper to introduce to Madam Des Anges his father's old friend, Mr. Van Riper. Mr. Van Riper bowed as low as his waistcoat would allow, and courteously observed that the honor then accorded him he had enjoyed earlier in the evening through the kind offices of Mr. Jacob Dolph, senior.

Madam Des Anges dandled her quizzing-glass as though she meant to put it up to her eye, and said, in a weary way:

"Mr.—ah—Van Riper must pardon me. I have not the power of remembering faces that some people appear to have; and my eyes—my eyes are not strong."

Old Van Riper stared at her, and he turned a turkey-cock purple all over his face, down to the double chin that hung over his white neckerchief.

"If your ladyship has to buy spectacles," he sputtered, "it needn't be on my account."

And he stamped off to the sideboard and tried to cool his red-hot rage with potations of Jamaica rum. There his wife found him. She had drawn near when she saw him talking with the great Madam Des Anges, and she had heard, as she stood hard by and smiled unobtrusively, the end of that brief conversation. Her face, too, was flushed—a more fiery red than her flame-colored satin dress.

She attacked him in a vehement whisper.

"Van Riper, what are you doing? I'd almost believe you'd had too much liquor, if I didn't know you hadn't had a drop. Will you ever learn what gentility is? D'ye want us to live and die like toads in a hole? Here you are with your ill manners, offending Madam Des Anges, that everybody knows is the best of the best, and there's an end of all likelihood of ever seeing her and her folks, and two nieces unmarried and as good girls as ever was, and such a connection for your son, who hasn't been out of the house it's now twelve months—except to this very wedding here, and you've no thought of your family when once you lose that mighty fine temper of yours, that you're so prodigious proud of; and where you'll end us, Van Riper, is more than I know, I vow."

But all she could get out of Van Riper was:

"The old harridan! She'll remember my name this year or two to come, I'll warrant ye!"

. . . . . .

It was all over at last, and old black Julius, who

had been acting as a combination of link-boy and major-domo at the foot of the front steps, extinguished his lantern, and went to bed, some time before a little white figure stole up the stairs and slipped into a door that Chloe—black Chloe—held open.

And the next day Jacob Dolph the elder handed the young bride into the new travelling-carriage with his stateliest grace, and Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Dolph, junior, rolled proudly up the road, through Bloomingdale, and across King's Bridge—stopping for luncheon at the Des Anges house—over to New Rochelle, where the feminine head of the house of Des Anges received them at her broad front door, and where they had the largest room in her large, old-fashioned house, for one night. Madam Des Anges wished to keep them longer, and was authoritative about it. But young Jacob settled the question of supremacy then and there, with the utmost courtesy, and Madam Des Anges, being great enough to know that she was beaten, sent off the victor on the morrow, with his trembling accomplice by his side, and wished them *bon voyage* as heartily as she possibly could.

So they started afresh on their bridal tour, and very soon the travelling carriage struck the old Queen Anne's Road, and reached Yonkers. And there, and from there up to Fishkill, they passed from one country-house to another, bright particular stars at this dinner and at that supper, staying a day here and a night there, and having just the

sort of sociable, public, restless, rattling good time that neither of them wanted.

At every country-house where they stayed a day they were pressed to stay a week, and always the whole neighborhood was routed out to pay them social tribute. The neighbors came in by all manner of conveyances. One family of aristocrats started at six o'clock in the morning, and travelled fourteen miles down the river in an ox-cart, the ladies sitting bolt upright, with their hair elaborately dressed for the evening's entertainment. And once a regular assembly ball was given in their honor, at a town-hall, the use of which was granted for the purpose specified by unanimous vote of the town council. Of course, they had a very good time; but then there are various sorts of good times. Perhaps they might have selected another sort for themselves.

There is a story that, on their way back, they put up for several days at a poor little hostelry under the hills below Peekskill, and spent their time in wandering through the woods and picking wild-flowers; but it lacks confirmation, and I should be sorry to believe that two well-brought-up young people would prefer their own society to the unlimited hospitality of their friends in the country.

Old Jacob Dolph, at home, had the great house all to himself; and, although black Chloe took excellent care of his material comforts, he was restless and troubled. He took most pleasure in a

London almanac, on whose smudgy pages he checked off the days. Letters came as often as the steamboat arrived from Albany, and he read them, after his fashion. It took him half the week to get through one missive, and by that time another had arrived. But I fear he did not make much out of them. Still, they gave him one pleasure. He endorsed them carefully with the name of the writer, and the date of receipt, and then he laid them away in his desk, as neatly as he had filed his business letters in his old days of active life.

Every night he had a candle alight in the hallway; and if there were a far-off rumble of carriage-wheels late at night, he would rise from his bed—he was a light sleeper, in his age—and steal out into the corridor, hugging his dressing-robe about him, to peer anxiously down over the balusters till the last sound and the last faint hope of his son's return had died away.

And, indeed, it was late in July when the travelling-carriage once more drew up in front of the Dolph house, and old Julius opened the door, and old Mr. Dolph welcomed them, and told them that he had been very lonely in their absence, and that their mother—and then he remembered that their mother was dead, and went into the house with his head bowed low.

III

ST. JOHN'S PARK and Hudson Street and all well-bred New York, for that matter, had its fill of the Dolph hospitality the next winter. It was dinner and ball and rout and merry-making of one sort or another, the season through. The great family sleighs and the little bachelor sleighs whirred and jingled up to the Dolph door surely two, and sometimes four, evenings in every week, and whirred and jingled away again at intensely fashionable hours, such as plain folk used for sleeping.

They woke up Abram Van Riper, did the revellers northward bound to country houses on the river-side, and, lying deep in his featherbed, he directed his rumbling imprecations at the panes of glass, that sparkled with frost in the mild moonlight.

"Oh, come, maidens, come, o'er the blue, rolling wave,
The lovely should still be the care of the brave—
Trancadillo, trancadillo, trancadillo, dillo, dillo, dillo!"

sang the misguided slaves of fashion, as they sped out of hearing.

"Trancadillo!" rumbled Mr. Van Riper. "I'd like to trancadillo them, consume 'em!" and then he cursed his old friend's social circle for a parcel

of trumpery fools and Mrs. Van Riper, lying by his side, sighed softly with chastened regret and hopeless aspiration.

But everybody else—everybody who was anybody—blessed the Dolphs and the Dolphs' cellar, and their man-servant and their maid-servant, and their roasted ox and their saddle of venison, and the distinguished stranger who was within their gates; and young Mrs. Dolph was made as welcome as she made others.

For the little girl with the great dark eyes took to all this giddiness as naturally as possible—after her quiet fashion. The dark eyes sparkled with subdued pleasure that had no mean pride in it when she sat at the head of her great mahogany table, and smiled at the double row of bright faces that hemmed in the gorgeous display of the Dolph silver and china and fine linen. And it was wonderful how charming were the famous Des Anges manners, when they were softened and sweetened by so much grace and beauty.

"Who would have thought she had it in her?" said the young ladies down in St. John's Park. "You remember her, don't you, what a shy little slip of a thing she was when we were at old Dumesnil's together? Who was it used to say that she had had the life grandmothered out of her?"

"Fine little creature, that wife of Dolph's," said the young men as they strolled about in Niblo's Garden. "Dolph wouldn't have had the road all to himself if that old dragon of a grandmother had

given the girl half a chance. 'Gad, she's an old grenadier! They say that Dolph had to put her through her facings the day after he was married, and that he did it in uncommon fine style, too."

"He's a lucky devil, that Dolph," the younger ones would sigh. "Nothing to do, all the money he wants, pretty wife, and the best wine in New York! I wish *my* old man would cut the shop and try to get an education in wine."

Their devotion to the frivolities of fashion notwithstanding, the young Dolphs were a loving, and, in a way, a domestic couple. Of course, everybody they knew had to give them a dinner or a ball, or pay them some such social tribute, and there were a myriad calls to be received and returned; but they found time for retired communings, even for long drives in the sleigh which, many a time in young Jacob Dolph's bachelor days, had borne the young man and a female companion—not always the same companion, either—up the Bloomingdale Road. And in the confidences of those early days young Jacob learned what his gentle little wife told him—without herself realizing the pathos of it—the story of her crushed, unchildlike youth, loveless till he came, her prince, her deliverer. Dolph understood it; he had known, of course, that she could not have been happy under the *régime* of Madam Des Anges; but when he heard the simple tale in all its monotonous detail, and saw spread out before him this poor young life, with its thousand little disappointments, submissions, abnegations, and undeserved

punishments and needless restrictions, a generous rage glowed in his heart, and perhaps sprang once in a while to his indiscreet lips; and out of this grew a deeper and maturer tenderness than his honeymoon love for the sweet little soul that he had at first sought only for the dark eyes through which it looked out upon its joyless world.

It is unwise to speak in profane language, it is injudicious to speak disrespectfully of old age, yet the Recording Angel, if he did not see fit to let a tear fall upon the page, perchance found it convenient to be mending his pen when young Jacob Dolph once uttered certain words that made his wife cry out:

"Oh, Jacob, don't, *please* don't. She didn't mean it!"

This is only a supposition. Perhaps Madam Des Anges really had meant well. But oh, how much happier this world would be if all the people who "mean well" and do ill would only take to meaning ill and doing well!

. . . . . .

Jacob Dolph the elder took but a doubtful part in all the festivities. The cloud that had hung dimly over him had begun to show little rifts; but the dark masses between the rifts were thicker and heavier than ever. It was the last brief convulsive struggle of the patient against the power of the anæsthetic, when the nervous hand goes up to put the cloth away from the mouth, just before the work is done and consciousness slips utterly away,

and life is no more for the sufferer, though his heart beat and the breath be warm between his lips.

When he was bright he was almost like his old self, and these delusive periods came oftenest when he met some old friend, or in quiet morning hours when his daughter—so he always called her—sat at his feet in the sunny breakfast-room, and sewed and listened, or perhaps read to him from Scott's latest novel.

He may have had some faint sub-consciousness of his condition, for although he took the deepest interest in the balls and the dinners, he would never appear before his son's guests except when he was at his best and brightest. But he loved to sit, withdrawn in a corner, watching the young life that fluttered through the great rooms, smiling to himself, and gently pleased if some old crony sought him out and talked of old times—the older the times were, the better he remembered them. Indeed, he now recalled some things that he had not thought of since his far-off boyhood.

In truth, the younger Dolphs often had small heart in their festal doings. But the medical science of the day, positive, self-satisfied, and blinded by all manner of tradition, gave them, through its ministers, cruelly false hopes of the old man's ultimate recovery. Besides, they could not well order things otherwise. The extravagant hospitality of the day demanded such ceremonial, and to have abated any part of it would only have served to grieve and to alarm the object of their care.

The whole business was a constant pride and joy to old Mr. Jacob Dolph. When there was a dinner to be given, he would follow Aline as she went about the house superintending the preparations of her servants, in her flowered apron of black silk, with her bunch of keys—honest keys, those, a good four inches long, with tongues as big as a domino—jingling at her side. He would himself overlook the making ready of the wines, and give oft-repeated instructions as to the proper temperature for the port, and see that the champagne was put on ice in the huge octagonal cellaret in the dining-room corner. And when all was ready, as like as not he would kiss Aline on the forehead, and say:

"I have a headache to-night, my dear, and I think I shall take my dinner in my room."

And he would go feebly up stairs, and when old Julius, who always waited upon him, brought up his tray, he would ask:

"Is it a fine dinner, Julius? Did everybody come?"

And Julius would invariably reply, with profound African dignity:

"Mons'us gran' dinneh, seh! 'E fines' dinneh I eveh witness', seh! I have stood behin' you' chai', seh, this thutty y'ah, an' I neveh see no such a gran' dinneh, Misteh Do'ph, seh!"

"Except the dinner we gave Mr. Hamilton, in State Street, Julius," the old man would put in.

"Excep' that, seh," Julius would gravely reply: "*that* was a pol-litical dinneh, seh; an' *of* co'se, a pol'litical dinneh—" an expressive pause—"but

this he' is sho'ly a mons'us fine dinneh, seh."

. . . . . .

His bodily vigor was unimpaired, however, and except that his times of entire mental clearness grew fewer and briefer as the months went on, there was little change in the old gentleman when the spring of 1829 came. He was not insane, he was not idiotic, even at the worst. It seemed to be simply a premature old age that clouded his faculties. He forgot many things, he was weakly absent-minded, often he did not recognize a familiar face, and he seemed ever more and more disinclined to think and to talk. He liked best to sit in silence, seemingly unconscious of the world about him; and if he was aroused from his dreamy trance, his wandering speech would show that his last thought—and it might have entered his mind hours before, at the suggestion of some special event—was so far back in the past that it dealt with matters beyond his son's knowledge.

He was allowed to do as he pleased, for in the common affairs of daily life he seemed to be able to care for himself, and he plaintively resented anything that looked like guardianship. So he kept up his custom of walking down into the city, at least as far as St. Paul's. It was thought to be safe enough, for he was a familiar figure in the town, and had friends at every turn.

But one afternoon he did not return in time for dinner. Young Jacob was out for his afternoon ride, which that day had taken him in the direction

of the good doctor's house. And when he had reached the house, he found the doctor likewise mounted for a ride. The doctor was going up to Bond Street—the Dolphs' quarter was growing fashionable already—to look at a house near Broadway that he had some thoughts of buying, for he was to be married the coming winter. So they had ridden back together, and after a long examination of the house, young Jacob had ridden off for a gallop through the country lanes; and it was five o'clock, and dinner was on the table, when he came to his father's house and learned from tearful Aline that his father was missing.

The horse was at the stable door when young Jacob mounted him once more and galloped off to Bond Street, where he found the doctor just ready to turn down the Bowery; and they joined forces and hurried back, and down Broadway, inquiring of the people who sat on their front stoops—it was a late spring evening, warm and fair—if they had seen old Mr. Dolph that day.

Many had seen him as he went down; but no one could remember that the old gentleman had come back over his accustomed path. At St. Paul's, the sexton thought that Mr. Dolph had prolonged his walk down the street. Further on, some boys had seen him, still going southward. The searchers stopped at one or two of the houses where he might have called; but there was no trace of him. It was long since old Jacob Dolph had made a formal call.

But at Bowling Green they were hailed by Mr. Philip Waters, who came toward them with more

excitement in his mien than a young man of good society often exhibited.

"I was going for a carriage, Dolph," he said: "your father is down there in the Battery Park, and I'm afraid—I'm afraid he's had a stroke of paralysis."

They hurried down, and found him lying on the grass, his head on the lap of a dark-skinned, ear-ringed Spanish sailor. He had been seen to fall from the bench near by, another maritime man in the crowd about him explained.

"It was only a minit or two ago," said the honest seafarer, swelled with the importance that belongs to the narrator of a tale of accident and disaster. "He was a-settin' there, had been for two hours 'most, just a-starin' at them houses over there, and all of a sudden chuck forward he went, right on his face. And then a man come along that knowed him, and said he'd go for a kerridge, or I'd 'a' took him on my sloop—she's a-layin' here now, with onions from Weathersfield—and treated him well; I see he wa'n't no disrespectable character. Here, Pedro, them's the old man's folks—let 'em take him. A-settin' there nigh on two hours, he was, just a-studyin' them houses. B'long near here?"

Young Jacob had no words for the Connecticut captain. Waters had arrived, with somebody's carriage, confiscated on the highway, and they gently lifted up the old gentleman and set off homeward. They were just in time, for Waters had been the earliest of the evening promenaders

to reach the Battery. It was dinner hour—or supper hour for many—and the park was given up to the lounging sailors from the river-side streets.

The doctor's face was dark.

"No, it is not paralysis," he said. "Let us proceed at once to your own home, Mr. Dolph. In view of what I am now inclined to consider his condition, I think it would be the most advisable course."

He was as precise and exact in his speech even then, as he was later on, when years had given an innocent, genial pomposity to his delivery of his rounded sentences.

They put old Jacob Dolph to bed in the room which he had always occupied, in his married as in his widowed days. He never spoke again; that day, indeed, he hardly moved. But on the next he stirred uneasily, as though he were striving to change his position. The doctor bled him, and they shifted him as best they could, but he seemed no more comfortable. So the doctor bled him again; and even that did no good.

About sunset, Aline, who had watched over him with hardly a moment's rest, left the room for a quarter of an hour, to listen to what the doctors had to say—there were four of them in the drawing-room below. When she and her husband entered the sick-room again, the old man had moved in his bed. He was lying on his side, his face to the windows that looked southward, and he had raised himself a little on his arm. There was a troubled gaze in his eyes, as of one who strains to

see something that is unaccountably missing from his sight. He turned his head a little, as though to listen. Thus gazing, with an inward and spiritual vision only, at the bay that his eyes might never again see, and listening to the waves whose cadence he should hear no more, the troubled look faded into one of inscrutable peace, and he sank back into the hollow of his son's arm and passed away.

. . . . . .

The next time that the doctor was in the house it was of a snowy night a few days after New Year's Day. It was half-past two o'clock in the morning, and Jacob Dolph—no longer Jacob Dolph the younger—had been pacing furiously up and down the long dining-room—that being the longest room in the house—when the doctor came down stairs, and addressed him with his usual unruffled precision:

"I will request of you, Dolph, a large glass of port. I need not suggest to you that it is unnecessary to stint the measure, for the hospitality of this house is——"

"How is she, doctor? For God's sake, tell me —is she—is she——"

"The hospitality of this house is prover—" the precise doctor recommenced.

"Damn the hospitality!" cried Jacob Dolph: "I mean—oh, doctor—tell me—is anything wrong?"

"Should I request of you the cup of amity and geniality, Mr. Dolph, were there cause for any-

thing save rejoicing in this house?" demanded the physician, with amiable severity. "I had thought that my words would have conveyed——"

"It's all over?"

"And bravely over!" And the doctor nodded his head with a dignified cheerfulness.

"And may I go to her?"

"You may, sir, after you have given me my glass of port. But remember, sir——"

Dolph turned to the sideboard, grasped a bottle and a glass, and thrust them into the doctor's hand, and started for the door.

"But remember, sir," went on the unperturbed physician, "you must not agitate or excite her. A gentle step, a tranquil tone, and a cheerful and encouraging address, brief and affectionate, will be all that is permitted."

Dolph listened in mad impatience, and was over the threshold before the doctor's peremptory call brought him back.

"What is it now?" he demanded, impatiently.

The doctor looked at him with a gaze of wonder and reproach.

"It is a male child, sir," he said.

Jacob Dolph crept up the stairs on tiptoe. As he paused for a moment in front of a door at the head, he heard the weak, spasmodic wail of another Dolph.

. . . . . .

"There's no help for it—I've got to do it," said Jacob Dolph.

It was another wintry morning, just after breakfast. The snow was on the ground, and the sleigh-bells up in Broadway sent down a faint jingling. Ten winters had come and gone, and Mr. Dolph was as comfortably stout as a man should be who is well fed and forty. He stood with his back to the fire, pulling at his whiskers—which formed what was earlier known as a Newgate collar—with his right thumb and forefinger. His left thumb was stuck in the armhole of his flowered satin waistcoat, black and shiny.

Opposite him sat a man of his own age, clean-shaven and sharp-featured. He had calm, somewhat cold, gray eyes, a deliberate, self-contained manner of speaking, and a pallid, dry complexion that suited with his thin features. His dress was plain, although it was thoroughly neat. He had no flowered satin waistcoat; but something in his bearing told you that he was a man who had no anxiety about the narrow things of the counting-room; who had no need to ask himself how much money was coming in to-morrow. And at the same time you felt that every cent of whatever might be to-morrow's dues would find its way to his hands as surely as the representative figures stood on his ledger's page. It was young Mr. Van Riper—but he, too, had lost his right to that title, not only because of his years, but because, in the garret of the house in Greenwich Village, a cob-web stretched from one of the low beams to the head of old Abram Van Riper's great walking-stick, which stood in the corner where it had been

placed, with other rubbish, the day after Abram Van Riper's funeral.

"I should not advise it, Dolph, if it can be helped," Mr. Van Riper observed, thoughtfully.

"It can't be helped."

"I can give you your price, of course," Van Riper went on, with deliberation; "but equally of course, it won't be anything like what the property will bring in the course of a few years."

Dolph kicked at the hearthrug, as he answered, somewhat testily:

"I'm not making a speculation of it."

Mr. Van Riper was unmoved.

"And I'm not making a speculation of you, either," he said, calmly; "I am speaking only for your own benefit, Dolph."

Mr. Dolph put his hands in his pockets, strode to the window and back again, and then said, with an uneasy little laugh:

"I beg your pardon, Van Riper; you're quite right, of course. The fact is, I've got to do it. I must have the money, and I must have it now."

Mr. Van Riper stroked his sharp chin.

"Is it necessary to raise the money in that particular way? You are temporarily embarrassed —I don't wish to be obtrusive—but why not borrow what you need, and give me a mortgage on the house?"

Ten years had given Jacob Dolph a certain floridity; but at this he blushed a hot red.

"Mortgage on the house? No, sir," he said, with emphasis.

"Well, any other security, then," was Van Riper's indifferent amendment.

Again Jacob Dolph strode to the window and back again, staring hard at the carpet, and knitting his brows.

Mr. Van Riper waited in undisturbed calm until his friend spoke once more.

"I might as well tell you the truth, Van Riper," he said, at last; "I've made a fool of myself. I've lost money, and I've got to pocket the loss. As to borrowing, I've borrowed all I ought to borrow. I *won't* mortgage the house. This sale simply represents the hole in my capital."

Something like a look of surprise came into Mr. Van Riper's wintry eyes.

"It's none of my business, of course," he observed; "but if you haven't any objection to telling me——"

"What did it? What does for everybody nowadays? Western lands and Wall Street—that's about the whole story. Oh, yes, I know—I ought to have kept out of it. But I didn't. I was nothing better than a fool at such business. I'm properly punished."

He sighed as he stood on the hearthrug, his hands under his coat-tails, and his head hanging down. He looked as though many other thoughts were going through his mind than those which he expressed.

"I wish," he began again, "that my poor old father had brought me up to business ways. I might have kept out of it all. College is a good

thing for a man, of course; but college doesn't teach you how to buy lots in western cities—especially when the western cities aren't built."

"College teaches you a good many other things, though," said Van Riper, frowning slightly, as he put the tips of his long fingers together; "I wish I'd had your chance, Dolph. *My* boy shall go to Columbia, that's certain."

"*Your* boy?" queried Dolph, raising his eyebrows.

Van Riper smiled.

"Yes," he said, "my boy. You didn't know I had a boy, did you? He's nearly a year old."

This made Mr. Jacob Dolph kick at the rug once more, and scowl a little.

"I'm afraid I haven't been very neighborly, Van Riper——" he began; but the other interrupted him, smiling good-naturedly.

"You and I go different ways, Dolph," he said. "We're plain folks over in Greenwich Village, and you—you're a man of fashion."

Jacob Dolph smiled—not very mirthfully. Van Riper's gaze travelled around the room, quietly curious.

"It costs money to be a man of fashion, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Dolph, "it does."

There was silence for a minute, which Van Riper broke.

"If you've got to sell, Dolph, why, it's a pity; but I'll take it. I'll see Ogden to-day, and we can

finish the business whenever you wish. But in my opinion, you'd do better to borrow."

Dolph shook his head.

"I've been quite enough of a fool," he replied.

"Well," said Mr. Van Riper, rising, "I must get to the office. You'll hear from Ogden to-morrow. I'm sorry you've got into such a snarl; but—" his lips stretched into something like a smile—"I suppose you'll know better next time. Good-day."

. . . . . .

After Mr. Dolph had bowed his guest to the door, Mrs. Dolph slipped down the stairs and into the drawing-room.

"Did he take it?" she asked.

"Of course he took it," Dolph answered, bitterly, "at that price."

"Did he say anything," she inquired again, "about its being hard for us to—to sell it?"

"He said we had better not sell it now—that it would bring more a few years hence."

"He doesn't understand," said Mrs. Dolph.

"He *couldn't* understand," said Mr. Dolph.

Then she went over to him and kissed him.

"It's only selling the garden, after all," she said; "it isn't like selling our home."

He put his arm around her waist, and they walked into the breakfast-room, and looked out on the garden which to-morrow would be theirs no longer, and in a few months would not be a garden at all.

High walls hemmed it in—the walls of the houses which had grown up around them. A few stalks stood up out of the snow, the stalks of old-fashioned flowers—hollyhock and larkspur and Job's-tears and the like—and the lines of the beds were defined by the tiny hedges of box, with the white snow-powder sifted into their dark, shiny green. The bare rose-bushes were there, with their spikes of thorns, and little mounds of snow showed where the glories of the poppy-bed had bloomed.

Jacob Dolph, looking out, saw the clear summer sunlight lying where the snow lay now. He saw his mother moving about the path, cutting a flower here and a bud there. He saw himself, a little boy in brave breeches, following her about, and looking for the harmless toads, and working each into one of the wonderful legends which he had heard from the old German gardener across the way. He saw his father, too, pacing those paths of summer evenings, when the hollyhocks nodded their pink heads, and glancing up, from time to time, at his mother as she sat knitting at that very window. And, last of all in the line, yet first in his mind, he saw his wife tripping out in the fresh morning, to smile on the flowers she loved, to linger lovingly over the beds of verbena, and to pick the little nosegay that stood by the side of the tall coffee-urn at every summer-morning breakfast.

And the wife, looking out by his side, saw that splendid boy of theirs running over path and bed, glad of the flowers and the air and the freedom,

full of young life and boyish sprightliness, his long hair floating behind him, the light of hope and youth in his bright face.

And to-morrow it would be Van Riper's; and very soon there would be houses there, to close up the friendly window which had seen so much, which had let so much innocent joy and gladness into the old breakfast-room; and there would be an end of flower-bordered paths and nodding hollyhocks. She put her face upon her husband's shoulder, and cried a little, though he pretended not to know it. When she lifted it, somehow she had got her eyes dry, though they were painfully bright and large.

"It isn't like selling our house," she said.

IV

JACOB DOLPH got out of the Broadway stage at Bowling Green, followed by Eustace Dolph. Eustace Dolph at twenty-two was no more like his father than his patrician name was like simple and scriptural Jacob. The elder Dolph was a personable man, certainly; a handsome man, even, who looked to be nearer forty than fifty-two; and he was well dressed—perhaps a trifle out of the mode—and carried himself with a certain genial dignity, and with the lightness of a man who has not forgotten that he has been a buck in his time. But Eustace was distinctly and unmistakably a dandy. There are superficial differences, of course, between the dandy of 1852 and the dandy of 1887; but the structural foundation of all types of dandy is the same through all ages. Back of the clothes—back of the ruffles, or the bright neckcloth, or the high pickardil—which may vary with the time or the individual, you will ever find clearly displayed to your eyes the obvious and unmistakable spiritual reason for and cause of the dandy—and it is always self-assertion pushed beyond the bounds of self-respect.

Now, as a matter of fact, young Eustace's garments were not really worse than many a man has worn from simple, honest bad taste. To be sure,

the checked pattern of his trousers was for size like the design of a prison grating; he had a coat so blue that it shimmered in the sunlight; his necktie was of purple satin, and fearfully and wonderfully made and fringed, and decked with gems fastened by little gold chains to other inferior guardian gems; and his waistcoat was confected of satin and velvet and damask all at once; yet you might have put all these things on his father, and, although the effect would not have been pleasant, you would never have called the elder gentleman a dandy. In other words, it was Why young Eustace wore his raiment that made it dandified, and not the inherent gorgeousness of the raiment itself.

The exchange of attire might readily have been made, so far as the size of the two men was concerned. But only in size were they alike. There was nothing of the Dolph in Eustace's face. He bore, indeed, a strong resemblance to his maternal great-grandmother, now many years put away where she could no longer trouble the wicked, and where she had to let the weary be at rest. (And how poor little Aline had wept and wailed over that death, and lamented that she had not been more dutiful as a child!) But his face was not strong, as the face of Madam Des Anges had been. Some strain of a weaker ancestry reappeared in it, and, so to speak, changed the key of the expression. What had been pride in the old lady bordered on superciliousness in the young man. What had been sternness became a mere haughti-

ness. Yet it was a handsome face, and pleasant, too, when the young smile came across it, and you saw the white, small teeth and the bright, intelligent light in the dark eyes.

The two men strolled through the Battery, and then up South Street, and so around through Old Slip. They were on business; but this was also a pleasure trip to the elder. He walked doubly in spirit through those old streets—a boy by his father's side, a father with his son at his elbow. He had not been often in the region of late years. You remember, he was a man of pleasure. He was one of the first-fruits of metropolitan growth and social culture. His father had made an idler and *dilettante* of him. It was only half a life at best, he thought, happy as he had been; blessed as he was in wife and child. He was going to make a business man of his own boy. After all, it was through the workers that great cities grew. Perhaps we were not ripe yet for that European institution, the idler. He himself had certain accomplishments that other Americans had not. He could *flâner,* for instance. But to have to *flâner* through fifty or sixty or seventy years palled on the spirit, he found. And one thing was certain, if any Dolph was ever to be an accomplished *flâneur,* and to devote his whole life to that occupation, the Dolph fortune must be vastly increased. Old Jacob Dolph had miscalculated. The sum he had left in 1829 might have done very well for the time, but it was no fortune to idle on among the fashionables of 1852.

Something of this Mr. Dolph told his son; but the young man, although he listened with respectful attention, appeared not to take a deep interest in his father's reminiscences. Jacob Dolph fancied even that Eustace did not care to be reminded of the city's day of small things. Perhaps he had something of the feeling of the successful struggler who tries to forget the shabbiness of the past. If this were the case, his pride must have been chafed, for his father was eloquent in displaying the powers of an uncommonly fine memory; and he had to hear all about the slips, and the Fly Market, and the gradual extension of the water-front, and the piles on which the old Tontine was built, and the cucumber-wood pipes of the old water-company, still lying under their feet. Once, at least, he showed a genuine enjoyment of his father's discourse, and that was when it ran on the great retinue of servants in which Jacob Dolph the elder had indulged himself. I think he was actually pleased when he heard that his grandfather had at one time kept slaves.

Wandering in this way, to the running accompaniment of Mr. Dolph's lecture, they came to Water Street, and here, as though he were reminded of the object of their trip, the father summed up his reminiscences in shape for a neat moral.

"The city grows, you see, my boy, and we've got to grow with it. I've stood still; but you shan't."

"Well, governor," said the younger man, "I'll be frank with you. I don't like the prospect."

"You will—you will, my boy. You'll live to thank me."

"Very likely you're right, sir; I don't deny it; but, as I say, I don't like the prospect. I don't see—with all due respect, sir—how any gentleman can *like* trade. It may be necessary, and of course I don't think it's lowering, or any of that nonsense, you know; but it can't be *pleasant*. Of course, if *your* governor had to do it, it was all right; but I don't believe he liked it any better than I should, or he wouldn't have been so anxious to keep you out of it."

"My poor father made a great mistake, Eustace. He would admit it now, I'm sure, if he were alive."

"Well, sir, I'm going to try it, of course. I'll give it a fair trial. But when the two years are up, sir, as we agreed, I hope you won't say anything against my going into the law, or—well, yes—" he colored a little—"trying what I can do on the Street. I know what you think about it, sir," he went on, hastily; "but there are two sides to the question, and it's my opinion that, for an intelligent man, there's more money to be made up there in Wall Street in one year than can be got out of haggling over merchandise for a lifetime."

Jacob Dolph grew red in the face and shook his head vigorously.

"Don't speak of it, sir, don't speak of it!" he said, vehemently. "It's the curse of the country. If you have any such infernal opinions, don't vent them in my presence, sir. I know what I am talk-

ing about. Keep clear of Wall Street, sir. It is the straight road to perdition."

They entered one of a row of broad-fronted buildings of notable severity and simplicity of architecture. Four square stone columns upheld its brick front, and on one of these faded gilt letters, on a ground of dingy black, said simply:

ABRAM VAN RIPER'S SON.

There was no further announcement of Abram Van Riper's Son's character, or of the nature of his business. It was assumed that all people knew who Abram Van Riper's Son was, and that his (Abram Van Riper's) ship-chandlery trade had long before grown into a great "commission merchant's" business.

It was full summer, and there were no doors between the pillars to bar entrance to the gloomy cavern behind them, which stretched in semi-darkness the whole length and width of the building, save for a narrow strip at the rear, where, behind a windowed partition, clerks were writing at high desks, and where there was an inner and more secluded pen for Abram Van Riper's son.

In the front of the cave, to one side, was a hoistway, where bales and boxes were drawn up from the cellar or swung twisting and twirling to the lofts above. Amidships the place was strewn with small tubs, matting-covered bales and boxes, coils of bright new rope, and odd-looking packages of a hundred sorts, all of them with gaping wounds

in their envelopes, or otherwise having their pristine integrity wounded. From this it was not difficult to guess that these were samples of merchandise. Most of them gave forth odors upon the air, odors ranging from the purely aromatic, suggestive of Oriental fancies or tropic dreams of spice, to the positively offensive—the latter varieties predominating.

But certain objects upon a long table were so peculiar in appearance that the visitors could not pass them by with a mere glance of wonder. They looked like small leather pies, badly warped in the baking. A clerk in his shirt sleeves, with his straw hat on one side of his head, whistled as he cut into these, revealing a livid interior, the color of half-cooked veal, which he inspected with care. Eustace was moved to positive curiosity.

"What are they?" he inquired of the clerk, pride mingling with disgust in his tone, as he caught a smell like unto the smell which might arise from raw smoked salmon that had lain three days in the sun.

"Central American," responded the clerk, with brevity, and resumed his whistling of

> "My name is Jake Keyser, I was born in Spring Garden;
> To make me a preacher my father did try."

"Central American *what?*" pursued the inquirer.

"*Rubber!*" said the clerk, with a scorn so deep and far beyond expression that the combined pride of the Dolphs and the Des Anges wilted into

silence for the moment. As they went on toward the rear office, while the clerk gayly whistled the notes of

> "It's no use a-blowing, for I am a hard 'un—
> I'm bound to be a butcher, by heavens, or die!"

Eustace recovered sufficiently to demand of his father:

"I say, sir, shall I have to handle that damned stuff?"

"Hush!" said his senior; "here's Mr. Van Riper."

Mr. Van Riper came to the office door to welcome them, with his thin face set in the form of a smile.

"Ah!" he said, "here's the young man, is he? Fine big fellow, Dolph. Well, sir, so you are going to embrace a mercantile career, are you? That's what they call it in these fine days, Dolph."

"I am going to try to, sir," replied the young man.

"He will, Van Riper," put in his father, hastily; "he'll like it as soon as he gets used to it—I know he will."

"Well," returned Mr. Van Riper, with an attempt at facetious geniality, "we'll try to get his nose down to the grindstone, we will. Come into my office with me, Dolph, and I'll hand this young gentleman over to old Mr. Daw. Mr. Daw will feel his teeth—eh, Mr. Daw?—see what he *doesn't* know—how's that—Mr. Daw? You remember Mr. Daw, Dolph—used to be with your father

before he went out of business—been with us ever since. Let's see, how long is that, Daw? Most fifty years, ain't it?"

Mr. Daw, who looked as though he might have been one hundred years at the business, wheeled around and descended with stiff deliberation from his high stool, holding his pen in his mouth as he solemnly shook hands with Jacob Dolph, and peered into his face. Then he took the pen from his mouth.

"Looks like his father," was Mr. Daw's comment. "Forty-five years the twenty-ninth of this month, sir. You was a little shaver then. I remember you comin' into the store and whittlin' timber with your little jack-knife. I was only eleven years with your father, sir—eleven years and six months—went to him when I was fourteen years old. That's fifty-six years and six months in the service of two of the best houses that ever was in New York—an' I can do my work with any two young shavers in the town—ain't missed a day in nineteen years now. Your father hadn't never ought to have gone out of business, Mr. Dolph. He did a great business for those days, and he had the makin' of a big house. Goin' to bring your boy up like a good New York merchant, hey? Come along with me, young man, and I'll see if you're half the man your grandfather was. He hadn't never ought to have given up business, Mr. Dolph. But he was all for pleasurin', an' the playhouses, an' havin' fine times. Come along, young man. What's your name?"

"Eustace Dolph."

"Hm! Jacob's better."

And he led the neophyte away.

"Curious old case," said Mr. Van Riper, dryly. "Best accountant in New York. See that high stool of his?—can't get him off it. Five years ago I gave him a low desk and an armchair. In one week he was back again, roosting up there. Said he didn't feel comfortable with his feet on the ground. He thought that sort of thing might do for aged people, but *he* wasn't made of cotton-batting."

Thus began Eustace Dolph's apprenticeship to business, and mightily ill he liked it.

. . . . . .

There came a day, a winter day in 1854, when there was a great agitation among what were then called the real old families of New York. I cannot use the term "fashionable society," because that is more comprehensive, and would include many wealthy and ambitious families from New England, who were decidedly not of the Dolphs' set. And then, the Dolphs could hardly be reckoned among the leaders of fashion. To live on or near the boundaries of fashion's domain is to lower your social status below the absolute pitch of perfection, and fashion in 1854 drew the line pretty sharply at Bleecker Street. Above Bleecker Street the cream of the cream rose to the surface; below, you were ranked as skim milk. The social world was spreading up into the wastes sacred to

the circus and the market-garden, although, if Admiral Farragut had stood on his sea-legs where he stands now, he might have had a fairly clear view of Chelsea Village, and seen Alonzo Cushman II., or Alonzo Cushman III., perhaps, going around and collecting his rents.

But the old families still fought the tide of trade, many of them neck-deep and very uncomfortable. They would not go from St. John's Park, nor from North Moore and Grand Streets. They had not the *bourgeois* conservatism of the Greenwich Villagers, which has held them in a solid phalanx almost to this very day; but still, in a way, they resented the up-town movement, and resisted it. So that when they did have to buy lots in the high-numbered streets they had to pay a fine price for them.

It was this social party that was stirred by a bit of scandal about the Dolphs. I do not know why I should call it scandal; yet I am sure society so held it. For did not society whisper it, and nod and wink over it, and tell it in dark corners, and chuckle, and lift its multitudinous hands and its myriad eyebrows, and say in innumerable keys: "Well, *upon* my word!" and "Well, I *should* think——!" and "Who would *ever* have thought of such a thing?" and the like? Did not society make very funny jokes about it, and did not society's professional gossips get many an invitation to dinner because they professed to have authentic details of the way Mr. and Mrs. Dolph

looked when they spoke about it, and just what they had to say for themselves?

And yet it was nothing more than this, that Mr. Dolph, being fifty-four, and his wife but a few years younger, were about to give to the world another Dolph. It was odd, I admit; it was unusual; if I must go so far, it was, I suppose, unconventional. But I don't see that it was necessary for Mr. Philip Waters to make an epigram about it. It was a very clever epigram; but if you had seen dear old Mrs. Dolph, with her rosy cheeks and the gray in her hair, knitting baby-clothes with hands which were still white and plump and comely, while great dark eyes looked timorously into the doubtful, fear-clouded future, I think you would have been ashamed that you had even listened to that epigram.

The expected event was of special and personal interest to only three people—for, after all, when you think of it, it was not exactly society's business—and it affected them in widely different ways.

Jacob Dolph was all tenderness to his wife, and all sympathy with her fears, with her nervous apprehensions, even with her morbid forebodings of impossible ills. He did not repine at the seclusion which the situation forced upon them, although his life for years had been given up to society's demands, until pleasure-seeking and pleasure-giving had grown into a routine, which occupied his whole mind. His wife saw him more

than she had for many years. Clubs and card-parties had few temptations for him now; he sat at home and read to her and talked to her, and did his best to follow the injunctions of the doctor, and "create and preserve in her a spirit of cheerful and hopeful tranquillity, free of unnecessary apprehension."

But when he *did* go to the club, when he was in male society, his breast expanded, and if he had to answer a polite inquiry as to Mrs. Dolph's health, I am afraid that he responded: "Mrs. Dolph is extremely well, sir, extremely well!" with a pride which the moralists will tell you is baseless, unworthy, and unreasonable.

As for Aline herself, no one may know what timorous hopes stirred in her bosom and charmed the years away, and brought back to her a lovely youth that was almost girlish in its innocent, half-frightened gladness. Outside, this great, wise, eminently proper world that she lived in girded at the old woman who was to bear a child, and laughed behind tasselled fans, and made wondrous merry over Nature's work; but within the old house she sat, and sewed upon the baby-clothes, or, wandering from cupboard to cupboard, found the yellowing garments, laid away more than a score of years before—the poor little lace-decked trifles that her first boy had worn; and she thanked heaven, in her humble way, that twenty-four years had not taken the love and joy of a wife and a mother out of her heart.

She could not find all her boy's dresses and toys,

for she was open-handed, and had given many of them away to people who needed them. This brought about an odd encounter. The third person who had a special interest in the prospect of the birth of a Dolph was young Eustace, and he found nothing in it wherewith to be pleased. For Eustace Dolph was of the ultra-fashionables. He cared less for old family than for new ideas, and he did not let himself fall behind in the march of social progress, even though he was, as he admitted with humility born of pride, only a poor devil of a down-town clerk. If his days were occupied, he had his nights to himself, and he lengthened them to suit himself. At first this caused his mother to fret a little; but poor Aline had come into her present world from the conventional seclusion of King's Bridge, and her only authority on questions of masculine license was her husband. He, being appealed to, had to admit that his own hours in youth had been late, and that he supposed the hours of a newer generation should properly be later still. Mr. Dolph forgot, perhaps, that while his early potations had been vinous, those of the later age were distinctly spirituous; and that the early morning cocktail and the midnight brandy-and-soda were abominations unknown to his own well-bred youth. With port and sherry and good Bordeaux he had been familiar all his life; a dash of *liqueur* after dinner did not trouble his digestion; he found a bottle of champagne a pleasant appetizer and a gentle stimulant; but whiskey and gin were to him the drinks of the

vulgar; and rum and brandy stood on his sideboard only to please fiercer tastes than his own. Perhaps, also, he was ignorant of the temptations that assail a young man in a great city, he who had grown up in such a little one that he had at one time known every one who was worth knowing in it.

However this may have been, Eustace Dolph ruled for himself his going out and his coming in. He went further, and chose his own associates, not always from among the scions of the "old families." He found those excellent young men "slow," and he selected for his own private circle a set which was mixed as to origin and unanimously frivolous as to tendency. The foreign element was strongly represented. Bright young Irishmen of excellent families, and mysterious French and Italian counts and marquises, borrowed many of the good gold dollars of the Dolphs, and forgot to return an equivalent in the local currency of the O'Reagans of Castle Reagan, or the D'Arcy de Montmorenci, or the Montescudi di Bajocchi. Among this set there was much merry-making when the news from the Dolph household sifted down to them from the gossip-sieve of the best society. They could not very well chaff young Dolph openly, for he was muscular and high-tempered, and, under the most agreeable conditions, needed a fight of some sort every six months or so, and liked a bit of trouble in between fights. But a good deal of low and malicious humor came his way, from one source or another,

and he, with the hot and concentrated egotism of youth, thought that he was in a ridiculous and trying position, and chafed over it.

There had been innuendos and hints and glancing allusions, but no one had dared to make any direct assault of wit, until one evening young Haskins came into the club "a little flushed with wine." (The "wine" was brandy.) It seems that young Haskins had found at home an ivory rattle which had belonged to Eustace twenty years before, and which Mrs. Dolph had given to Mrs. Haskins when Eustace enlarged his horizon in the matter of toys.

Haskins being, as I have said, somewhat flushed with brandy, came up to young Dolph, who was smoking in the window, and meditating with frowning brows, and said to him:

"Here, Dolph, I've done with this. You'd better take it back—it may be wanted down your way."

There was a scene. Fortunately, two men were standing just behind Dolph, who were able to throw their arms about him, and hold him back for a few seconds. There would have been further consequences, however, if it had not been that Eustace was in the act of throwing the rattle back at Haskins when the two men caught him. Thus the toy went wide of its mark, and fell in the lap of Philip Waters, who, old as he was, generally chose to be in the company of the young men at the club; and then Philip Waters did something that almost atones, I think, for the epigram.

He looked at the date on the rattle, and then he rose up and went between the two young men, and spoke to Haskins.

"Young man," he said, "when Mrs. Jacob Dolph gave your mother this thing, your father had just failed for the second time in three years. He had come to New York about five years before from Hartford, or Providence, or—Succotash, or whatever his confounded town was. Mr. Jacob Dolph got Mr. Van Riper to give your father an extension on his note, or he would have gone to the debtors' prison down by the City Hall. As it was, he had to sell his house, and the coat off his back, for all I know. If it hadn't been for the Dolphs, devil the rattle you'd have had, and you wouldn't have been living in Bond Street to-day."

After which Mr. Philip Waters sat down and read the evening paper; and when young Haskins was able to speak he asked young Dolph's pardon, and got it—at least, a formal assurance that he had it.

The baby was born in the spring, and everybody said she was the image of her mother.

. . . . . .

There will come a day, it may be, when advancing civilization will civilize sleighing out of existence, as far as New York is concerned. Year after year the days grow fewer that will let a cutter slip up beyond the farthest of the "road-houses" and cross the line into Westchester. People say that the climate is changing; but close

observers recognize a sympathy between the decrease of snow-storms and the increase of refinement—that is, a sympathy in inverse ratio; a balanced progress in opposite directions. As we grow further and further beyond even old-world standards of polite convention, as we formalize and super-formalize our codes, and steadily eliminate every element of amusement from our amusements, Nature in strict conformity represses her joyous exuberance. The snow-storm of the past is gone, because the great public sleigh that held twenty-odd merrymakers in a shell like a circus band-wagon has gone out of fashion among all classes. Now we have, during severe winters, just enough snow from time to time to bear the light sleigh of the young man who, being in good society, is also horsy. When *he* finds the road vulgar, the poor plebeian souls who go sleighing for the sport of it may sell their red and blue vehicles, for Nature, the sycophant of fashion, will snow no more.

But they had "good old-fashioned" snow-storms eighty years after the Declaration of Independence, and one had fallen upon New York that tempted Mrs. Jacob Dolph to leave her baby, ten months old, in the nurse's charge, and go out with her husband in the great family sleigh for what might be the last ride of the season.

They had been far up the road—to Arcularius's, maybe, there swinging around and whirling back. They had flown down the long country road, and back into the city, to meet—it was early in the

day—the great procession of sleighing folk streaming northward up Broadway. It was one of New York's great, irregular, chance-set carnivals, and every sleigh was out, from the "exquisite's" gilded chariot, a shell hardly larger than a fair-sized easy-chair, to the square, low-hung red sledge of the butcher-boy, who braved it with the fashionables, his *Schneider*-made clothes on his burly form, and his girl by his side, in her best Bowery bonnet. Everybody was a-sleighing. The jingle of countless bells fell on the crisp air in a sort of broken rhythm—a rude *tempo rubato*. It was fashionable then. But we—we amuse ourselves less boisterously.

They drew up at the door of the Dolph house, and Jacob Dolph lifted his wife out of the sleigh, and carried her up the steps into the breakfast-room, and set her down in her easy-chair. He was bending over her to ask her if her ride had done her good, when a servant entered and handed him a letter marked "Immediate."

He read it, and all the color of the winter's day faded out of his face.

"I've got to go down to Van Riper's," he said, "at once; he wants me."

"Has anything happened to—to Eustace?" his wife cried out.

"He doesn't say so—I suppose—I suppose it's only business of some sort," her husband said. His face was white. "Don't detain me, dear. I'll come back as soon as—as soon as I can get through."

He kissed her, and was gone. Half an hour later he sat in the office of Abram Van Riper's Son.

There was no doubting it, no denying it, no palliating it even. The curse had come upon the house of Jacob Dolph, and his son was a thief and a fugitive.

It was an old story and a simple story. It was the story of the Haskins's million and the Dolphs' hundred thousand; it was the story of the boy with a hundred thousand in prospect trying to spend money against the boy with a million in sight. It was the story of cards, speculation—another name for that sort of gambling which is worse than any on the green cloth—and what is euphemistically known as wine.

There was enough oral and documentary evidence to make the whole story hideously clear to Jacob Dolph, as he sat in that dark little pen of Van Riper's and had the history of his son's fall spelled out to him, word by word. The boy had proved himself apt and clever in his office work. His education had given him an advantage over all the other clerks, and he had learned his duties with wonderful ease. And when, six months before, old Mr. Daw had let himself down from his stool for the last time, and had muffled up his thin old throat in his great green worsted scarf, and had gone home to die, young Dolph had been put temporarily in his place. In those six months he had done his bad work. Even Van Riper admitted that it must have been a sudden temptation. But

—he had yielded. In those six months fifty thousand dollars of Abram Van Riper's money had gone into the gulf that yawned in Wall Street; fifty thousand dollars, not acquired by falsifying the books, but filched outright from the private safe to which he had access; fifty thousand dollars, in securities which he had turned into money, acting as the confidential man of the house.

When Jacob Dolph, looking like a man of eighty, left the private office of Mr. Van Riper he had two things to do. One was to tell his wife, the other was to assign enough property to Van Riper to cover the amount of the defalcation. Both had been done before night.

V

IT is to be said for society that there was very little chuckling and smiling when this fresh piece of news about the Dolphs came out. Nor did the news pass from house to house like wildfire. It rather leaked out here and there, percolating through barriers of friendly silence, slipping from discreet lips and repeated in anxious confidence, with all manner of qualifications and hopeful suppositions and suggestions. As a matter of fact, people never really knew just what Eustace Dolph had done, or how far his wrongdoing had carried him. All that was ever positively known was that the boy had got into trouble down-town, and had gone to Europe. The exact nature of the trouble could only be conjectured. The very brokers who had been the instruments of young Dolph's ruin were not able to separate his authorized speculations from those which were illegitimate. They could do no more than guess, from what they knew of Van Riper's conservative method of investment, that the young man's unfortunate purchases were made for himself, and they figured these at fifty-five thousand odd hundred dollars.

Somebody, who looked up the deed which Jacob Dolph executed that winter day, found that he had

transferred to Van Riper real estate of more than that value.

No word ever came from the cold lips of Abram Van Riper's son; and his office was a piece of all but perfect machinery, which dared not creak when he commanded silence. And no one save Van Riper and Dolph, and their two lawyers, knew the whole truth. Dolph never spoke about it to his wife, after that first night. It was these five people only who knew that Mr. Jacob Dolph had parted with the last bit of real estate that he owned, outside of his own home, and they knew that his other property was of a doubtful sort, that could yield at the best only a very limited income—hardly enough for a man who lived in so great a house, and whose doors were open to all his friends nine months in the year.

Yet he stayed there, and grew old with an age which the years have not among their gifts. When his little girl was large enough to sit upon his knee, her small hands clutched at a snowy-white mustache, and she complained that his great, dark, hollow eyes never would look "right into hers, away down deep." Yet he loved her, and talked more to her perhaps than to any one else, not even excepting Aline.

But he never spoke to her of the elder brother whom she could not remember. It was her mother who whispered something of the story to her, and told her not to let papa know that she knew of it, for it would grieve him. Aline herself knew nothing about the boy save that he lived, and lived

a criminal. Jacob himself could only have told her that their son was a wandering adventurer, known as a blackleg and sharper in every town in Europe.

The doors of the great house were closed to all the world, or opened only for some old friend, who went away very soon out of the presence of a sadness beyond all solace of words, or kindly look, or hand-clasp. And so, in something that only the grace of their gentle lives relieved from absolute poverty, those three dwelt in the old house, and let the world slip by them.

. . . . . .

There was no sleep for any one of the little household in the great house on the night of the 14th of July, 1863. Doors and blinds were closed; only a light shone through the half-open slats at a second-story window, and in that room Aline lay sick, almost unto death, her white hair loosed from its usual dainty neatness, her dark eyes turning with an unmeaning gaze from the face of the little girl at her side to the face of her husband at the foot of her bed. Her hands, wrinkled and small, groped over the coverlet, with nervous twitchings, as every now and then the howls or the pistol-shots of the mob in the streets below them fell on her ear. And at every such movement the lips of the girl by her pillow twitched in piteous sympathy. About half-past twelve there was sharp firing in volleys to the southward of them, that threw the half-conscious sufferer into an agony of supersensitive disturbance. Then there came a

silence that seemed unnaturally deep, yet it was only the silence of a summer night in the deserted city streets.

Through it they heard, sharp and sudden, with something inexplicably fearful about it, the patter of running feet. They had heard that sound often enough that night and the night before; but these feet stopped at their own door, and came up the steps, and the runner beat and pounded on the heavy panels.

Father and child looked in each other's eyes, and then Jacob Dolph left his post at the foot of the bed, and, passing out of the room, went down the stairs with deliberate tread, and opened the door.

A negro's face, almost gray in its mad fear, stared into his with a desperate appeal which the lips could not utter. Dolph drew the man in, and shut the door behind him. The negro leaned, trembling and exhausted, against the wall.

"I knowed you'd take me in, Mist' Dolph," he panted; "I'm feared they seen me, though—they was mighty clost behind."

They were close behind him, indeed. In half a minute the roar of the mob filled the street with one terrible howl and shriek of animal rage, heard high above the tramp of half a thousand feet; and the beasts of disorder, gathered from all the city's holes and dens of crime, wild for rapine and outrage, burst upon them, sweeping up the steps, hammering at the great door, crying for the blood of the helpless and the innocent.

Foreign faces, almost all! Irish, mostly; but there were heavy, ignorant German types of feature uplifted under the gas-light; sallow, black-mustached Magyar faces; thin, acute, French faces—all with the stamp of old-world ignorance and vice upon them.

The door opened, and the white-haired old gentleman, erect, haughty, with brightening eyes, faced the leader of the mob—a great fellow, black-bearded, who had a space to himself on the stoop, and swung his broad shoulders from side to side.

"Have you got a nigger here?" he began, and then stopped short, for Jacob Dolph was looking upon the face of his son.

Vagabond and outcast, he had the vagabond's quick wit, this leader of infuriate crime, and some one good impulse stirred in him of his forfeited gentlehood. He turned savagely upon his followers.

"He ain't here!" he roared. "I told you so—I saw him turn the corner."

"Shtap an' burrn the bondholder's house!" yelled a man behind. Eustace Dolph turned round with a furious, threatening gesture.

"You damned fool!" he thundered; "he's no bondholder—he's one of *us*. Go on, I tell you! Will you let that nigger get away?"

He half drove them down the steps. The old man stepped out, his face aflame under his white hair, his whole frame quivering.

"You lie, sir!" he cried; but his voice was

drowned in the howl of the mob as it swept around the corner, forgetting all things else in the madness of its hideous chase.

When Jacob Dolph returned to his wife's chamber, her feeble gaze was lifted to the ceiling. At the sound of his footsteps she let it fall dimly upon his face. He was thankful that, in that last moment of doubtful quickening, she could not read his eyes; and she passed away, smiling sweetly, one of her white old hands in his, and one in her child's.

. . . . . .

Age takes small account of the immediate flight of time. To the young, a year is a mighty span. Be it a happy or an unhappy year that youth looks forward to, it is a vista that stretches far into the future. And when it is done, this interminable year, and youth, just twelve months older, looks back to the first of it, what a long way off it is! What tremendous progress we have have made! How much more we know! How insufficient are the standards by which we measured the world a poor three hundred and sixty-five days back!

But age has grown habituated to the flight of time. Years? we have seen so many of them that they make no great impression upon us. What! is it ten years since young Midas first came to the counting room, asking humbly for an entry-clerk's place—he who is now the head of the firm? Bless us! it seems like yesterday. Is it ten years since

we first put on that coat? Why, it must be clean out of the fashion by this time.

But age does not carry out the thought, and ask if itself be out of fashion. Age knows better. A few wrinkles, a stoop in the back, a certain slowness of pace, do not make a man old at sixty—nor at seventy, neither; for now you come to think of it, the ten years we were speaking of is gone, and it is seventy now, and not sixty. Seventy! Why, 'tis not to be thought of as old age—save when it may be necessary to rebuke the easy arrogance of youth.

The time had come to Jacob Dolph when he could not feel that he was growing old. He was old, of course, in one sense. He was sixty-one when the war broke out; and they had not allowed him to form a regiment and go to the front at its head. But what was old for a soldier in active service was not old for a well-preserved civilian. True, he could never be the same man again, now that poor Aline was gone. True, he was growing more and more disinclined for active exercise, and he regretted he had led so sedentary a life. But though '64 piled itself up on '63, and '65 on top of that, these arbitrary divisions of time seemed to him but trivial.

Edith was growing old, perhaps; getting to be a great girl, taller than her mother and fairer of complexion, yet not unlike her, he sometimes thought, as she began to manage the affairs of the house, and to go about the great shabby mansion with her mother's keys jingling at her girdle.

For the years went on crawling one over the other, and soon it was 1873, and Edith was eighteen years old.

One rainy day in this year found Jacob Dolph in Wall Street. Although he himself did not think so, he was an old man to others, and kindly hands such as were to be found even in that infuriate crowd, had helped him up the marble steps of the Sub-Treasury and had given him lodgment on one of the great blocks of marble that dominate the street. From where he stood he could see Wall Street, east and west, and the broad plaza of Broad Street to the south, filled with a compact mass of men, half hidden by a myriad of umbrellas, rain-soaked, black, glinting in the dim light. So might a Roman legion have looked, when each man raised his targum above his head and came shoulder to shoulder with his neighbor for the assault.

There was a confused, ant-like movement in the vast crowd, and a dull murmur came from it, rising, in places, into excited shouts. Here and there the fringe of the mass swelled up and swept against the steps of some building, forcing, or trying to force, an entry. Sometimes a narrow stream of men trickled into the half-open doorway; sometimes the great portals closed, and then there was a mad outcry and a low groan, and the foremost on the steps suddenly turned back, and in some strange way slipped through the throng and sped in all directions to bear to hushed or clamorous offices the news that this house or that

bank had "suspended payment." "Busted," the panting messengers said to white-faced merchants; and in the slang of the street was conveyed the message of doom. The great panic of 1873 was upon the town—the outcome of long years of unwarranted self-confidence, of selfish extravagance, of conscienceless speculation—and, as hour after hour passed by, fortunes were lost in the twinkling of an eye, and the bread was taken out of the mouths of the helpless.

After Jacob Dolph had stood for some time, looking down upon the tossing sea of black umbrellas, he saw a narrow lane made through the crowd in the wake of a little party of clerks and porters, bearing aid perhaps to some stricken bank. Slipping down, he followed close behind them. Perhaps the jostling hundreds on the sidewalk were gentle with him, seeing that he was an old man; perhaps the strength of excitement nerved him, for he made his way down the street to the flight of steps leading to the door of a tall white building, and he crowded himself up among the pack that was striving to enter. He had even got so far that he could see the line pouring in above his head, when there was a sudden cessation of motion in the press, and one leaf of the outer iron doors swung forward, meeting the other, already closed to bar the crush, and two green-painted panels stood, impassable, between him and the last of the Dolph fortune.

One howl and roar, and the crowd turned back on itself, and swept him with it. In five minutes

a thousand offices knew of the greatest failure of the day; and Jacob Dolph was leaning—weak, gasping, dazed—against the side wall of a hallway in William Street, with two stray office-boys staring at him out of their small, round, unsympathetic eyes.

Let us not ask what wild temptation led the old man back again to risk all he owned in that hellish game that is played in the narrow street. We may remember this: that he saw his daughter growing to womanhood in that silent and almost deserted house, shouldered now by low tenements and wretched shops and vile drinking-places; that he may have pictured for her a brighter life in that world that had long ago left him behind it in his bereaved and disgraced loneliness; that he had had some vision of her young beauty fulfilling its destiny amid sweeter and fairer surroundings. And let us not forget that he knew no other means than these to win the money for which he cared little; which he found absolutely needful.

After Jacob Dolph had yielded for the last time to the temptation that had conquered him once before, and had ruined his son's soul; after that final disastrous battle with the gamblers of Wall Street, wherein he lost the last poor remnant of the great Dolph fortune, giving up with it his father's home forever, certain old bread of his father's casting came back to him upon strange waters.

Abram Van Riper came to the daughter of the house of Dolph, a little before it became certain

that the house must be sold, and told her, in his dry way, that he had to make a business communication to her, for he feared that her father was hardly capable of understanding such matters any longer. She winced a little; but he took a load off her heart when he made his slow, precise explanation. The fact was, he said, that the business transactions between her father and himself, consequent upon the defalcation of her brother Eustace, had never been closed, in all these seventeen years. (Edith Dolph trembled.) It was known at the time that the property transferred by her father rather more than covered the amount of her brother's—peculation. But her father's extreme sensitiveness had led him to avoid a precise adjustment, and as the property transferred was subject to certain long leases, he, Mr. Van Riper, had thought it best to wait until the property was sold and the account closed, to settle the matter with Mr. Dolph. This had lately been done, and Mr. Van Riper found that, deducting charges, and interest on his money at seven per cent., he had made by the transaction six thousand three hundred and seventy dollars. This sum, he thought, properly belonged to Mr. Dolph. And if Miss Dolph would take the counsel of an old friend of her father's, she would leave the sum in charge of the house of Abram Van Riper's Sons. The house would invest it at ten per cent.—he stopped and looked at Edith, but she only answered him with innocent eyes of attention—and would pay her six hundred and thirty-seven dollars annually

in quarterly payments. It might be of assistance to Mr. Dolph in his present situation.

It was of assistance. They lived on it, father and daughter, with such aid as Decorative Art—just introduced to this country—gave in semi-remunerative employment for her deft fingers.

Abram Van Riper, when he left the weeping, grateful girl, marched out into the street, turned his face toward what was once Greenwich Village, and said to his soul:

"I think that will balance any obligation my father may have put himself under in buying that State Street house too cheap. Now then, old gentleman, you can lie easy in your grave. The Van Ripers ain't beholden to the Dolphs, that's sure."

. . . . . .

A few years ago—shall we say as many as ten?—there were two small rooms up in a quiet street in Harlem, tenanted by an old gentleman and a young gentlewoman; and in the front room, which was the young woman's room by night, but a sort of parlor or sitting-room in the daytime, the old gentleman stood up, four times a year, to have his collar pulled up, and his necktie set right, and his coat dusted off by a pair of small white hands, so that he might be presentable when he went down town to collect certain moneys due him.

They were small rooms, but they were bright and cheerful, being decorated with sketches and studies of an artistic sort, which may have been

somewhat crude and uncertain as to treatment, but were certainly pleasant and feminine. Yet few saw them save the young woman and the old man. The most frequent visitor was a young artist from the West, who often escorted Miss Dolph to and from the Art League rooms. His name was Rand; he had studied in Munich; he had a future before him, and was making money on his prospects. He might just as well have lived in luxurious bachelor quarters in the lower part of the city; but, for reasons of his own, he preferred to live in Harlem.

Old Mr. Dolph insisted on going regularly every quarter-day to the office of the Van Riper Estate, "to collect," as he said, "the interest due him." Four times a year he went down town on the Eighth Avenue cars, where the conductors soon learned to know him by his shiny black broadcloth coat and his snow-white hair. His daughter was always uneasy about these trips; but her father could not be dissuaded from them. To him they were his one hold on active life—the all-important events of the year. It would have broken his tender old heart to tell him that he could not go to collect his "interest." And so she set his necktie right, and he went.

When he got out of the car at Abingdon Square he tottered, in his slow, old way, to a neat structure which combined modern jauntiness with old-time solidity, and which was labelled simply: "Office of the Van Riper Estate," and there he told the smilingly indulgent clerk that he thought he would

"take it in cash, this time," and, taking it in cash, went forth.

And then he walked down through Greenwich Village into New York city, and into the street where stood the house that his father had built. Thus he had gone to view it four times a year, during every year save the first, since he had given it up.

He had seen it go through one stage of decadence after another. First it was rented, by its new owner, to the Jewish pawnbroker, with his numerous family. Good, honest folk they were, who tried to make the house look fine, and the five daughters made the front stoop resplendent of summer evenings. But they had long ago moved up-town. Then it was a cheap boarding-house, and vulgar and flashy men and women swarmed out in the morning and in at eventide. Then it was a lodging-house, and shabby people let themselves out and in at all hours of the day and night. And last of all it had become a tenement-house, and had fallen into line with its neighbors to left and right, and the window-panes were broken, and the curse of misery and poverty and utter degradation had fallen upon it.

But still it lifted its grand stone front, still it stood, broad and great, among all the houses in the street. And it was the old man's custom, after he had stood on the opposite sidewalk and gazed at it for a while, to go to a little French *café* a block to the eastward, and there to take a glass of *vermouth gommé*—it was a mild drink, and pleas-

ing to an old man. Sometimes he chanced to find some one in this place who would listen to his talk about the old house—he was very grand; but they were decent people who went to that *café*, and perhaps would go back with him a block and look at it. We would not have talked to chance people in an east-side French *café*. But then we have never owned such a house. and lost it—and everything else.

. . . . . .

Late one hot summer afternoon young Rand sat in his studio, working enthusiastically on a "composition." A new school of art had invaded New York, and compositions were everything, for the moment, whether they composed anything or nothing. He heard a nervous rattling at his door-knob, and he opened the door. A young woman lifted a sweet, flushed, frightened face to his.

"Oh, John," she cried, "father hasn't come home yet, and it's five o'clock, and he left home at nine."

John Rand threw off his flannel jacket, and got into his coat.

"We'll find him; don't worry, dear," he said.

They found him within an hour. The great city, having no further use for the old Dolph house, was crowding it out of existence. With the crashing of falling bricks, and the creaking of the tackle that swung the great beams downward, the old house was crumbling into a gap between two high walls. Already you could see through to where the bright new bricks were piled at the back to

build the huge eight-story factory that was to take its place. But it was not to see this demolition that the crowd was gathered, filling the narrow street. It stood, dense, ugly, vulgar, stolidly intent, gazing at the windows of the house opposite —a poor tenement house.

As they went up the steps they met the young hospital surgeon, going back to his ambulance.

"You his folks?" he inquired. "Sorry to tell you so, but I can't do any good. Sunstroke, I suppose—may have been something else—but it's collapse now, and no mistake. You take charge, sir?" he finished, addressing Rand.

Jacob Dolph was lying on his back in the bare front room on the first floor. His daughter fell on her knees by his side, and made as though she would throw her arms around him; but, looking in his face, she saw death quietly coming upon him, and she only bent down and kissed him, while her tears wet his brow.

Meanwhile a tall Southerner, with hair half way down his neck, and kindly eyes that moved in unison with his broad gestures, was talking to Rand.

"I met the ol' gentleman in the French *café,* neah heah," he said, "and he was jus' honing to have me come up and see his house, seh—house he used to have. Well, I came right along, an' when we got here, sure 'nough, they's taihin' down that house. Neveh felt so bad in all my life, seh. He wasn't expectin' of it, and I 'lowed 'twuz his old home like, and he was right hahd hit, fo' a fact. He said to me, 'Good-day, seh,' sezee; 'good-day,

seh,' he says to me, an' then he starts across the street, an' first thing I know, he falls down flat on his face, seh. Saw that theah brick an' mortar comin' down, an' fell flat on his face. This hyeh pill-man 'lowed 'twuz sunstroke; but a Southern man like I am don't need to be told what a gentleman's feelings are when he sees his house a-torn down—no, seh. If you ever down oweh way, seh, I'd be right glad——"

But Rand had lifted Edith from the floor, for her father would know her no more, and had passed out of this world, unconscious of all the squalor and ruin about him; and the poor girl was sobbing on his shoulder.

He was very tender with her, very sorry for her —but he had never known the walls that fell across the way; he was a young man, an artist, with a great future before him, and the world was young to him, and she was to be his wife.

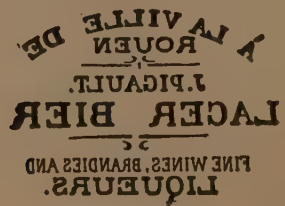
Still, looking down, he saw that sweetly calm, listening look, that makes beautiful the faces of the dead, come over the face of Jacob Dolph, as though he, lying there, heard the hammers of the workmen breaking down his father's house, brick by brick—and yet the sound could no longer jar upon his ear or grieve his gentle spirit.

THE MIDGE

I

IT was quiet in the Brasserie Pigault. It was a snowy night, for one thing, the air full of a damp, heavy fall of broad white flakes. And then there had been a bad fire down in Grand Street, and the frivolous and pleasure-seeking portion of the quarter's population had gone down to see the wounded people taken out of the ruins.

So business was dull at the Brasserie Pigault. Undeservedly dull, for the only stains on the dim walls were the stains of time: the table-tops shone like century-polished mahogany, the lusty, friendly fire glowed through the red eyes of the great stove, the sand on the floor was crystal-bright, and bright were Madame Pigault's black eyes, as she sat knitting behind the desk, and looked toward the window, where a fantail of gas-jets lit up alluringly the legend which, when you once got inside, read:



It was only a beer-saloon, of course; but there were a comfort and cleanliness about it that were almost homelike. And, just for this dull hour, the room was filled with the charm of that sacred yet sociable quiet which the male animal of our species loves to establish in whatever serves him for club-room.

There were little noises, but they were of a gentle sort. From time to time there was the joggle of falling coal in the big stove; and then Louis, the waiter, set it right with a subdued rattling. Sometimes a gas-jet flared and wheezed and whistled until madame's knitting-needles clicked on the counter, and Louis flew across the room just as the vicious spurt of flame made up its mind to subside. More often than this, a glass clinked against the shining brass faucet of the keg, and there was a "whish!" of beer, quickly drowned in its own bubbling overflow. And almost regularly every ten minutes, the crash of shuffling dominoes came from where Mr. Martin and M. Ovide Marié, the curly-haired music-teacher from Amity Street, were playing.

Just across the room from Mr. Martin and M. Marié, at the table under the corresponding gas-light, sat the Doctor. His overcoat, with its military-looking cape, was thrown back over his shoulders, his elbows were planted on the table, and his head was propped up between the closed fists. A good American face it was, too, that looked at you over those lean, sinewy, nervous American knuckles. A hatchet-face, if you will, but a pleasant

face for all that—strong and fine, with the lines of good stock in it, with force in the clear gray eye and humor in the curl of the mouth. A gentle face—babies pawed the air to get at it as soon as they saw it—and yet, looking at it, you could quite understand that this was the same Captain Peters who, in 1863, carried despatches straight through Quantrell's lines to that interesting arm of the U. S. forces which at that time was fighting fire with fire, up and down Missouri.

Nobody ever called him Captain nowadays, though. Between Broadway and the North River, from Washington Square nearly to Canal Street, old residents hailed him as "Doctor," and with the sensitive modesty of the genuine soldier, he accepted the civilian title, and said nothing about his captaincy or his record. Besides, it was Fate, he thought, that he should be a doctor after some fashion. All the Evert Peterses for five generations back (and there the count stopped) had been doctors. This last Evert Peters had had no liking for a physician's life; but no choice had been given him. When he was old enough to go to medical college, to medical college he went, and there he stayed until six weeks before final examination, when his father died. Then he gave his books and kit to his chum, went back to Oneida, buried his father, took himself to Troy, and set to work studying civil engineering. Then the war broke out, and he found what little he knew of medicine and civil-engineering coming handy in ways he never dreamed of. When he came home

from the war, he sought out the quiet region where what is now the French Quarter of New York merges into Greenwich Village, and there settled himself for a week or two, to look about him. And then Ovide Bocage, working in the planing-mill in Prince street, got his hand into the machinery, and would have lost three fingers if it had not been for the timely surgery of the young man just home from the war. And so the young man was gratefully called "the Doctor." The "week or two" had become fourteen years, the pale brown hair of the "young man" had grown paler yet with streaks of gray, the great city had grown up and left their quarter far down town, but still the people thereabout called Evert Peters "the Doctor," and he occupied a well-established yet ill-defined place in the community, something between the physician and the priest, a sort of amateur ally and adjunct of two professions, accepted by both and recognized by neither; but very dearly loved by all with whom he had to do.

He knew what was wanted, sitting cozily that night in the Brasserie Pigault, when he heard Piero open the door, put his head in, and shout:

"Ohé, m'sieu' le docteur!"

Piero had the singsong of the sea in his cheery hail. He was a Franco-Italian, and the first voyage he ever made was his voyage to this country, in 1867, on the bark *Mariana III.* As the rest of the *Mariana's* burden consisted of Cette wines and Portuguese sailors, it must have been Piero's personal virtue that saved her from going down in an unre-

grettable shipwreck. Since his arrival Piero had never left the French quarter; but, with the aid of a pair of rings in his ears and a roll in his walk, he contrived to give a maritime flavor to his life; and when he entered a room, as far as he possibly could he made you feel that he was just opening the door of your cabin to smile on you with his storm-beaten brown face and report all snug aloft.

"What's the matter, Piero?" inquired the Doctor, with a harmless scowl bringing his bushy gray eyebrows closer together.

"Ooman goin' die," Piero answered, grinning with all his white teeth: "goin' die bad, down 'Ouston Strit."

"Why don't you go for Dr. Milhaud? It's his business, you marine chissy-cat," said the Doctor, trying to be irritable. "How often have I got to tell you that I won't interfere with a regular physician unless it's a case of necessity?"

"Yes," grinned Piero, catching at the last word: "Necess'tairee, vair necess'tairee. She goin' die, ev-vair-ee time, shu'."

The Doctor rose from his table with a little sigh of discomfort and a glance at his half-drunk glass of beer, and then he resolutely buttoned his coat.

"Where's Dr. Milhaud? Down at the fire?"

"Yes, sair. Down to ze fi-er. Two men burn', t'ree kill', le petit Coquerel knock' down by engine; guess lose leg," Piero explained, with great cheerfulness. "Doct' Milhaud got 'em boce, dem fell's ouat bin burn'—zey don't ouant go to no hospital."

"More fools they," observed the Doctor, lead-

ing the way to the door, touching his hat as he passed Mme. Pigault. Piero cast a longing, suggestive eye at the bar, and followed him out where the silent flakes sifted down on them out of the moist blackness above.

"Who is it now, Piero?" inquired the Doctor, as he strode on, tall and straight, towering above Piero, who rolled along as though he had the whole Spanish Main surging in his legs.

"Zat Poland lady, wiz ze li'l gal. Her hosban' he die two mont' ago."

"Why, Piero,"—the Doctor knit his brows again,—"that woman's in the last stages of consumption, sure enough. Milhaud told me about her. You don't want *me* to go there; you want the priest."

"No, she don' ouant no prist," and Piero shook his head vigorously: "she sen' fo' *you*."

"What's her religion?"

"Ma foi, I guess she don' got no God nor nossin'. I say to her: 'I get you prist.'—She say: 'You get me prist; prist bring my hosban' back, eh?' I say: 'No; if you got hosban', ouat you ouant of prist? if you no got you' hosban' no mo', zen you ouant prist. Zat ouat prist good fo'—talk good ouen you ain' got ouat you ouant.' "

The Doctor laughed softly.

"Zen M'sieu' Goubaud—she bo'd wiz M'sieu' Goubaud, he biggin talkin', an' he say: 'You *ex*-cuse me, madame; you die somevair else, I don' care ouaire you go; you die he', in my 'ouse, you got go heaven. Eef you no have prist, you have prodestan'; if you no have prodestan', you have

Doct' Pittair.' Zen she say: 'I take Doct' Pittair,' an' M'sieu' Goubaud, he sen' me fo' you."

It was an old story for the Doctor. Many was the poor outcast, afraid to face priest or clergyman, who had consented to open his sin-laden heart to the good-natured stranger who was nothing more than a sympathetic fellow-sinner. This was a sort of duty for which the Doctor considered himself utterly unfit; but which chance forced upon him. He went through it all with a grimly humorous hope that some good, in some unseen direction, might come of it all. For himself, he could find, as he said, no sense in it. "Far as *I* can see," he remarked once, "I'm getting my system saturated with the smell of cabbage, and helping a lot of cussed scoundrels to die easy, when it would be a sight healthier for their eternal souls to take hold and wrastle with their iniquity, and die with some sort of understanding of what their prospects are. I'm afraid some of those fellows that I've sent off so slick and pleasant wouldn't thank me for it now."

In Houston Street, the dampness and heaviness, and the lifeless fall of the snowflakes, were enough to depress the spirits of even the children, who had long ceased to skylark about the areas and basements and up and down the sharp-pitched steps. Beer saloons and groceries kept the street awake with patches of light; but the weight of the dull, damp weather was over everything.

M. Goubaud was a dealer in feathers, and the

smell of his stock penetrated to the uttermost corner of the rickety building in which he kept shop and stored lodgers. But it was lost among a dozen other smells in the close back room to which Piero led the Doctor. Few sick-rooms are sweet, but in this one was an element of unusual offensiveness in the musky cheap perfume which rose from an open trunk in one corner where some bits of gaudy silk and satin showed bright and sharp amid the dirt and grime around them.

"Theatrical, of course," said the Doctor to himself. He sat down by the bed while Piero introduced him:

"Doct' Pittair!" announced the sea-farer, his head half-way in the door: "All same prist!" and he vanished.

Emaciated and death-stricken, it was beautiful still, the face that lay pale against the soiled blue ticking of the pillow. Young, too, the Doctor noticed; scant thirty. A lovely creature she must have been, ten years before, when there was color in those tea-rose cheeks, rosy fire in the pale, shapely lips, life in the tangled mass of dark hair damp with death. Her great black eyes opened as he looked at her, and in the first flash it seemed as though he saw her as she must have been. Then they closed again wearily; they had taken no notice of his presence.

Madame Goubaud, sallow, lean and unsympathetic, bent her hard mechanic face over the sick woman, and raspingly appealed to her to wake up and say her last words to the good doctor.

The thin face moved on the pillow in a pettish way, and the eyes remained obstinately closed.

"*Maman!*"

This came from a child, a girl, a thin, small reproduction of the dying woman; a little dark-haired, dark-eyed thing, who had slipped up in front of the visitor, and stood, frowning anxiously as she looked at the invalid. Her meagre, nervous hands grasped a medicine-bottle and a spoon.

"*Maman!*" she said again with a vehement severity of tone, while her pale lips trembled: "Maman! parle donc! ce n'est pas gentil, ça—tu le sais bien!" She turned to the Doctor in explanation and dropped into an English of her own. The voice was childish; but the manner, the management of emphasis and inflection, were absurdly mature.

"It is with a sick as with a crazy, monsieur. You must treat them as the children. It is no use to reason with them. Maman! tu m'écoutes?"

The mother opened her great eyes again, and stared at the Doctor, at first vacantly, then with a fretful summoning of intelligence.

"C'est M. Peters," said the child, encouragingly. Her English words she pronounced correctly, with perhaps the least faintly perceptible trace of a French accent. But the French seemed to slip more easily to her tongue.

The mother was opening and closing her feverish lips, as though to indicate that her mouth was dry and choking. The Doctor noted in the act that little touch of exaggeration and appeal which

marks the undisciplined invalid. The child put a spoonful of water between her mother's lips and carefully tilted it, standing patiently, with knit brows and watchful eyes, until it was all drunk.

"You spik Franch?" inquired the woman, hoarsely. The Doctor bowed. His French had never recovered from the accent he had painfully learned at school; but he had been long enough in the French quarter to accustom his ears to a language that he heard more frequently than his own; and he could generally follow what was said to him, were it said in anything short of a Basque patois. It was a rapid talker who could force him to help himself out with an occasional "*pah* si vite!" or "*kesker*-c'est-que-ça."

But he had a hard task this time. The woman's story was brief, and her speech was slow, but so improbable seemed what she had to say, so incoherent and confused was her manner of saying it, that when, at the end, she drew from under the pillow and thrust at him a loose handful of dirty, creased and crumpled letters and papers, the Doctor took them mechanically, while he stared at the stranger with puzzled eyes, wondering whether she was delirious or he was dazed.

Her name was Mrs. Eustace Talbot. Her husband—her dead husband—had been a great singer, though no one knew an artist in this accursed country. She was going to die, she knew. She was only thirty; but that was thirty years too much, and she was going to die. It was better so; there was a good God, after all, for he sometimes

let people die. When she was dead, she wanted to have her child sent to England, to her husband's people. Her uncle, Sir Richard Talbot, would care for the little one. He was a great man—a very rich man—if it was any trouble to M. le docteur, he would be well paid for it. He was a demon, Sir Richard; but at least he was not *canaille;* he would take the child out of this *canaille* atmosphere that had killed her poor father and her poor mother. Sir Richard had a palace; he would take the child to his palace; she would learn to forget her miserable father and mother; it was best; she could only remember them as living among *canaille*—and so—the papers would tell all to M. le docteur—so let her die in peace.

This was told brokenly, excitement struggling with weakness. It ended in a piteous and feeble outcry over her sad case, over her unhappy life; and then she turned her back on Dr. Peters, with a movement of the shoulders that seemed to dismiss him and the world together. There was so much of the spoiled child in it, so much of hysterical affectation and exaggeration, that if the Doctor had not seen the unmistakable signs of death in the damp face, he would have taken it for an extreme case of invalid malingering.

All the while the little girl stood by the bedside, her large, dark, anxious eyes fixed on her mother. Their look of distressed comprehension was painfully mature; but her upper lip quivered in childish fashion, and her breast heaved with big breaths that were almost sobs. She still held the

spoon, and at each breath it clicked softly against the glass in her other hand. She said not a word, and her gaze never once dropped from the sick woman's face.

The Doctor left the bedside and sat down under the one meagre gas-jet to glance over the letters. He was not ready to believe this story of rich and titled connections. But it was true, seemingly. He slowly shuffled over the soiled papers, lifting them up to the dim light, and they bore out the tale. They were mainly short notes from Sir Richard Talbot, of Pollard Hall, Stonehill, Kent, to his brother in Paris. They were of an unfriendly tone, refusing or grudgingly allowing repeated demands for money. But they left no doubt that there was a Sir Richard Talbot, and that he had had a scapegrace brother named Eustace, and that this Eustace was an opera-singer.

He had scarcely run through them when he heard a new sound from the bed, and Mme. Goubaud bent quickly to look in the changing face. The Doctor crossed the room, but not before the child had thrown herself forward on the bed in a storm of tears and caressing cries and wild appeals to the spirit that was slipping away in dumb unconsciousness. She knew it; she had seen it before, inexorable death. There was no hope in her instinctive outcry; she saw, with wide, staring eyes, the light sink out of the face and leave a hard, dull gray, a blank strangeness; and she knew what it meant.

She turned in quick, understanding obedience

when the Doctor drew her to him and held her face against his breast. For a moment it rested there motionless, and then her sobs broke forth, and her slim body shook and quivered in Dr. Peters's arms. He pressed her closer, and she clung to him and made no attempt to look behind her.

Madame Goubaud peered sharply into the still face, crossed herself, pressed her toilworn thumb down on the half-closed eyelids, and then, much as she might have corded up a bundle of feathers, passed an old red print handkerchief under the dead chin, and tied the ends in a knot on top of the head.

Dr. Peters lifted up the girl in his arms. She yielded herself to him, keeping her face away from the bed until she could hide her eyes on his shoulder. He carried her out of the room. Alphonsine, the homely-faced, good-natured apprentice of the house of Goubaud, offered to take *la pauvre petite* in her own bed that night. They climbed the steep stairs to the little attic room where Alphonsine shivered of winter nights until, under the collection of rags that served her for a coverlid, she generated the animal warmth of healthful sleep.

It was a poor place for the child, bleak and bare and wind-ridden, and the desperate poverty of the tattered bed-clothes caught the Doctor's eye; but he thought of Mme. Goubaud's soulless, hard face downstairs, and he left the little one to the comfort and protection of Alphonsine's broad bosom.

II

THE snow had ceased, the wind had risen, and the thermometer had fallen, when the Doctor set out for his home. It was late, too, past twelve, but he went out of his way to the little French undertaker's in Grand street. The undertaker was not in bed; he was "confectioning" an important commission, as he informed his visitor, and he crimped a piece of discolored satin and smiled cheerfully as he promised, with encouraging redundancy of assurances, that he would go around in the morning, and supply that hideously meagre attempt at a funeral which just saves the pride of the poor from the keen disgrace of the Potter's Field. A pine coffin, a hearse, one hack, and a share of a grave in some God-forsaken cemetery in New Jersey—you can have all these for twenty dollars.

And, that being settled, Dr. Peters went on to Washington Square, on the dark south side of which he found one late light glimmering in a high window. The house in which it shone stood a little back from the street, and looked even darker and gloomier than those about it. The one pale light did not give an idea of home; there was nothing of expectant welcome about it; it rather suggested a weary and uncanny wakefulness, and

made the Doctor feel that he ought to have been in bed hours before.

He let himself in with a great old-fashioned brass key, and toiled up the silent stairs, passing out of the region of perpetual cabbage only when he reached the third story.

He opened the door of his own private domain with some apprehension; but he found a bit of fire still in the grate—a fire of anthracite, clinkery, gassy, and dull, yet capable of revivification, and after a temporary eclipse under the blower, it brightened up and gave forth warmth after its kind.

The Doctor got into his slippers and his old "house-coat," while the fire was rekindling, and, late as it was, he lit his pipe and sat down with his soles close to the grate, to look over the papers in his pocket, for in addition to those he had received from Mrs. Talbot, M. Goubaud had seen fit to entrust him with a bundle of scrap-books, letters and odd documents found in the trunk with the theatrical raiment.

In the hour that he sat before the fire, he got at no more than the bare outlines of a story that in after years he was able to round out and fill up; but he had enough knowledge of the weak side of human nature to form in that brief glance a judgment which better knowledge only confirmed.

He found out that Eustace Reginald Hunt Hunt Talbot was the son of Sir Hugh Talbot, vaguely described in various clippings from French papers as "un nobleman anglais." His mother was a

Frenchwoman, the daughter of a rich banker, César Galifet. He had an uncle, Antoine Galifet, a Gascon, supposed to be a man of vast wealth. Uncle Antoine desired that his nephew Eustace should be brought up in France, and it appeared that the Talbot family was very willing to oblige Uncle Antoine. There was reason, indeed, to believe that they were glad to get rid of Eustace, and that Eustace had given them cause for such gladness. He was sent to France at twelve years of age, put through *pension* and *collége,* and turned loose in Paris ten years after he left England. Uncle Antoine had probably had some little schemes of his own for shaping the future of his nephew; but, whatever they may have been, they came to naught. From 1852 to 1862, Mr. Eustace Talbot, whom his French friends, by some Gallic association of ideas, called M. le vicomte de Talbot, was a man-about-town in Paris. He had an allowance from Uncle Antoine, just large enough to make him wish that it was larger, and when he was very deeply in debt he applied to his father in England, who generally sent him half the money he asked for, and just twice as much advice as he had use for. There was nothing to show that he had much to do with the "serious" society of Paris; he was a club man, a little of a rake, a little of a gambler, a handsome, amiable, superficially clever, and fairly accomplished young buck. He found his associates among the fast young Frenchmen who were in the theatre-lobbies when they were not in the theatre dressing-rooms, and among that

interesting class of aristocratic Englishmen who occasionally found it convenient to pass a few months in Paris, waiting for something or other to "blow over." He was a good shot, a fair fencer, and an amateur singer—a tenor—of some repute. Various "Chronicles of the Day" spoke of him as "le Mario du Cercle Anglais." There were two or three silvery, rouged daguerreotypes of him, taken about this time, and they showed him as with a black moustache and black whiskers—a sort of modified Newgate collar—much black, curly hair, a swelling chest and a flashing eye, and most marvelous waistcoats. He was doubtless a handsome man, in a consciously Byronic way.

Somewhere about 1857 Uncle Antoine died, and his vast wealth turned out to be a modest patrimony, to which he had added not one sou, in the course of a long, frugal and industrious life as a gentleman-farmer. Mr. Eustace Talbot, who had grumbled at his allowance, grumbled still more when he received his inheritance, and showed his contempt for the pitiful sum by spending it all in four or five years. In 1862 he found himself stranded. His father was dead, and his brother Richard was now the head of the house. And Brother Richard, when applied to for ready money, honored the draft with even more advice and even less money than had seemed proper to his excellent father. So it came to pass that Mr. Eustace Talbot, being thirty-four, somewhat faded as a buck and as a social success in the Paris clubs, having many debts and no more credit, and being

possessed still of a reasonably pleasing face and figure, and a nice little *voix de salon,* well cultivated, went on the stage, and made a successful first appearance at the Italiens, singing a small part in Mario's company.

Hereabouts in the story the documentary material became voluminous, while the solid information to be derived therefrom grew disproportionately meagre. There were dozens of newspaper paragraphs, polite criticisms and undisguised puffs, so worded as to feed the vanity of the man at and of whom they were written, and to show to the cold and unprejudiced reader that the poor devil had made a second-class, second-rate success for the moment.

Then, in 1865, before the success, such as it was, had quite faded away, Mr. Eustace Talbot married Mlle. Lodoiska Leczynska. There was little to be learned about Mlle. Leczynska. The Doctor, who had seen Mrs. Talbot die an hour before, could readily believe what the *Petit Figaro* said of her in 1865—that she was seventeen years of age, ravishingly beautiful, *svelte* and *brune,* and that she belonged to an aristocratic family of Poland. But that was all that the Doctor was destined to know of her origin—all, perhaps, that she herself knew. Talbot had found her, a mere child, in some little foreign colony quartered in Bohemian Paris—a respectable, decent, poverty-stricken, artistic, pretentious little set of people—there was enough in the notices of the wedding to show that much—and he had married her out of hand. It

was a love-match, pure and simple, and the love, at least, lasted: not in its first flush of ideal beauty, perhaps; but it lasted.

Sir Richard, in England, stormed. He thought his brother had disgraced the family name when he took to the stage; but this marriage was something not to be forgiven. His wounded pride led him to button his pocket all the closer.

Then the hard times came to the Eustace Talbots. For the first year they found life a merry game enough. They were poor; but it was with the picturesque, easy-going poverty of Bohemia. Their hardships were picknicking hardships, and they rather enjoyed roughing it. Talbot procured engagements to sing in the Provinces, and he had an Englishman's faculty for getting credit, and so they went merrily through the twelve-month. But at the end of it the baby was born—they christened her Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot, and she weighed seven pounds when she went to the font—and after that it was poverty out and out, bare, hard, shabby, degrading, worrying, toilsome troubled, ugly poverty. The provinces had grown tired of M. le vicomte de Talbot, with his swelling chest and his *voix de salon* and his handsome dandy face, with the crow's feet around the corners of his eyes. Paris laughed at him when he tried to get back into grand opera; and when he got down to singing in vaudeville at the "Folies Sylphides," Paris absolutely refused to laugh at him, and voted him a bore.

And so, at last, they had to go on the road in

frank vagabondage, and they wandered hither and thither, all over Europe, going anywhere where anybody would pay for the well-meant labors of a gentlemanly amateur who had once sung with Mario at the Salle Ventadour, and who would now give you "la Pipe de Mon Oncle" or "Mariette, Mariette, Ousqué la crevette?" and other pleasing ballads of the day, at five francs a ballad. Spas, baths, gambling-places, seaside towns, they tried them all, and their beggarly pilgrimage took them north, south, east and west. And all the time the little *voix de salon* grew thinner and reedier, the crow's-feet sank deeper, the marvelous waistcoats grew shabbier and duller.

The seven-pound baby was growing up and going through the education of Bohemia. The wife was sickly, helpless, loving, faithful, and forever complaining. Talbot carried his shabby gentility with a swagger, gambled a little, drank a little, sometimes made his wife more or less jealous, and never forgot—or said he never forgot—that he was an artist, an English gentleman, and one whom the world had used most vilely.

They were a happy family, too. They were all satisfied with themselves, and rich in complacent self-conceit, and they hung together loyally. True, Mr. Eustace Talbot's vanity occasionally marred the harmony; but only to bring about a completer unison, for his wife extracted a certain proud satisfaction from any testimony to the charms of the husband whom she had learned to worship as a demigod when she was a school-girl

and he was a dashing young buck of thirty-seven. He must have had crow's-feet then; he certainly had them now; but she had never seen them.

It did not require much imagination to picture the life they led—slipshod, needy, happy-go-lucky; pretentious at its very slovenliest; full of disappointments, humiliations and embarrassments. And through it all, in cheap lodging-houses and cheaper hotels, vulgarized by the enforced familiarities of poverty, much tried, often disillusioned, love sat down and rose up with them, and sweetened their bitter bread.

America was the end of it. Europe was exhausted after ten or eleven years of assiduous debt-sowing, and they turned to the land of gold and barbarians, where artists and gentlemen must certainly be at a premium. Sir Richard was called upon for help—positively for the last time—and he doled out fifty pounds for the privilege of having three thousand miles between himself and his brother.

They were not long in finding out that America is no place for an artist. After many rebuffs, the thin *voix de salon* piped its last—given a chance out of pure charity—in a wretched Bowery theatre, where the gallery-boys "guyed" it with cruel applause. And in the very first of the winter a young clerk at Bellevue Hospital grinned as he wrote down in his report to the Bureau of Vital Statistics the elaborate name of Eustace Reginald Hunt Hunt Talbot, dead of typhoid fever.

The rest Dr. Peters knew, of his own personal

knowledge—except that he never knew, nor cared to know by what hideous shifts and devices the few dollars left out of Sir Richard's fifty pounds had carried mother and child over the three months since the father had fallen sick.

The Doctor's fire was out. He kicked it, and brought down a shower of white ashes and grey cinders. He rose, and, gathering up the papers with a long-drawn whistle that ended in a sigh, he put them in his desk; and as he did so he said aloud—he had the old bachelor's habit of brief soliloquy—"Queer world, by jingo—powerful queer world!"

Then, as had been his habit every night for thirteen years, he stalked into the work-room that lay behind his "living-room," and looked at the accumulation of wrought metal that represented his work since 1865, when he set out to invent the ideal cannon. He laid a caressing hand upon the latest of his models, and looked at it for a moment, knitting his brows, as though he thought that perhaps the secret of success might be revealed to him in that glance. It was not, and he turned away, with a grim half-smile, and crossed the living-room again to the little hall-bedroom where his bachelor couch, virginal white, awaited him.

III

THE Doctor awoke the next morning with a special sense of duty to be performed. His days were monotonous enough to make this feeling somewhat of a pleasant surprise. The day, indeed, generally brought its duty of charity or benevolence; but it mostly took the form of a casual call upon his sympathy, the precise nature of which he could not foresee. And, as a rule, he had to minister only to accidental and temporary needs. As he himself put it, it was somebody everlastingly breaking legs at odd times.

But this time he felt that he had a case on his hands. He had had no chance to accept or refuse the trust Mrs. Talbot had sought to impose upon him. Death had settled that matter. To shirk the obligation now would be, he thought, to take an unfair advantage of a dead woman. Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot was to be handed over to her uncle in England, and he was to do it. He made no more question of that than he would have made fifteen years before had the work been allotted to him by order of his superior officer.

The first thing to be done was to get an appropriation from the French Benevolent Society, for the burying of the mother and for the maintenance of the child until such time as Sir Richard Talbot

should take charge of her. Old Luise, who "did for" him, brought the Doctor's breakfast—a scanty and uninviting meal of fried eggs and baker's bread—at half-past seven; and at eight he was at the rooms of the Benevolent Society, and the chirrupy, bald-headed little Secretary was inquiring what he could do for his "good fran' Pittairss."

His good friend Peters had been on similar errands many a time before, and went about the business with good-humored patience. The Secretary lifted his shoulders and raised his eyebrows and threw up his hands with little gestures of deprecation, and cast a faint shade of polite doubt on each separate statement, while the Doctor told his story and made his requests. It looked very discouraging; but it meant nothing; it was all a matter of form. And after a proper time the Secretary expressed himself satisfied that, in spite of her name (for the father had always sung as "Eustace Talbot"), the orphan waif was a genuine child of France, and, as such, entitled to relief at the hands of the Society. That it was the Society's duty to bury the mother he was not so clear. He wanted to compromise the matter.

"Doctor Pittairss," he said, with a humorous grimace of hopeless persuasion: "You ar-r-r reech —we 'av moch to do—manny sings to *at*-ten' to—w'y you don't help us—eh? You give 'alf, eh?"

"Not much," the Doctor placidly replied: "this is none of my funeral, Peloubet."

"All a-'ight," chirruped the little Secretary:

"se more you *Am*mery-can millionaires you 'ave monnee, se more you ar-r-r stingy, an' se more you talk slangue. Vair' well." His tone changed, and he laid a friendly hand on the Doctor's shoulder: "Eet is all a-'ight, my fran'. I sink sair will be no trobble. We bary se mosser, I sink. I let you know, anny 'ow. Catholique, eh?"

"No," said the Doctor, speaking promptly out of his profound ignorance: "Protestant."

The Secretary's face fell. This statement seemed to open the question of nationality once more—that is, he tried to look as though he thought it did. But this was again only a matter of form. The Secretary knew Dr. Peters well, and he had handled Dr. Peters's money, and the success of the application had been a foregone conclusion. He wore a doubtful frown as he saw the Doctor to the door; but within an hour he had put the Benevolent machinery in motion, and it was settled that the expenses of Mrs. Talbot's funeral were to be met by the Society, and that the child's board was to be paid at Mme. Goubaud's for three weeks at least, by which time Sir Richard might be heard from. Dr. Peters was to attend to that part of the business, they had agreed. It was the Doctor's own proposition. He felt that there was no necessity for further exposure of the skeletons in the Talbot's family closet.

The cold clearing of the night before had given way to a day of broken weather—pale sunshine and sharp snow-flurries. The dry little crystals tickled the Doctor's face as he strode across Wash-

ington Square to find the Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt, who was the clergyman in charge of the Mission Chapel of the Church of St. Gregorius.

He did not feel quite easy in his mind about getting Pratt to perform the funeral service, although it seemed to be, on the whole, the best thing to do. He had a tender conscience, and it hurt him to think that perhaps, in spite of her petulant cynicism, the dead woman had been a Catholic at heart, and that she might have resented the idea of being laid to rest with alien rites. But then he did not wish to go to Father Dubé. Dubé was worth a dozen of Pratt; but Dubé had his peculiarities. He was a hard-worked, conscientious priest, much wearied in spirit, and in his two hundred pounds of flesh, by the endless needs of his ever-straggling flock, and he drew the line of indulgence at impenitent death. It was enough, he thought, for people to neglect religion and morality and soap-and-water all their lives; when they came to die, the least they could do was to die in the church, and give their poor old pastor a chance to do something for their immortal souls at the one time when they couldn't possibly undo it themselves.

This was Father Dubé's idea, although he never formulated it exactly in this way. And so Dr. Peters felt a little delicacy about calling upon him to say mass for a stranger who had gone out of the world in a distinctly irreligious frame of mind. And Pratt would do just as well. It would never occur to Pratt to inquire whether or no the

departed sister over whom he was to read the service had really been a good Church-of-England woman. He lived in a state of mild surprise at the fact that there actually were people in this world who did not belong to the Church of England. If Dr. Peters asked him to read the service for the burial of the dead, he would read it, as a matter of course. He talked to the Doctor, whenever they met, about abstruse points of ecclesiastical law and custom, and he did his duty in the parish, and went away, afterward, when he was called to other fields of labor, without once dreaming that Peters had never understood the first word of his deliverances.

Dr. Peters's religious views had the haziness of extreme catholicity. In his childhood, when his parents were pillars of the Episcopal church in their little village in Oneida county, he had been brought up to look upon a Romanist as something nearly as bad as a Jew, in a different way, and not very far removed in guilt from the heathen. Later life, and much experience of sore-tried humanity, had taught him a lesson of wider charity. He had grown to think better of all creeds—and less of any particular one. Now, he was Father Dubé's friend, and the friend of the Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt, and the friend of Brother Strong, of the Bethel. And he liked the Roman Catholic priest best of the three.

The Reverend Mr. Pratt, seated in his study at a very big desk, stroked his thin brown whiskers and rubbed his prominent nose, as he dubiously

assented to Dr. Peters's proposition that the woman should be buried that day. He had never quite reconciled himself, he said, to the almost indecent haste so frequently practiced in the inhumation of the dead among the poorer classes. He would not go so far as to call it irreligious; but it certainly was repugnant to proper feeling.

"Well, you see, Mr. Pratt," said the Doctor, taking him patiently, as he had taken the Secretary of the Benevolent Society, "it can't very well be helped. We can't ask those Goubaud people to keep the body of a strange woman there. They are poor, you know, and they've had a great deal of trouble with the family already. And then they're Catholics."

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Pratt.

"And there's the child. It'll be better for *her* to get it all over at once, don't you think so? Remember Biedermann's little girl, who stole down in the night and sat by her father's coffin, and went out of her head? She hasn't been right since."

The Reverend Mr. Pratt vaguely remembered the occurrence. The Biedermann's were of Father Dubé's flock.

"There's no doubt about it," he observed: "those unfortunate people" (he meant the Catholics) "go to the other extreme, and postpone the last offices in a very unwise way."

"It's hard on the children," the Doctor went on; "and then, you know, it isn't as if we meant to

show any disrespect. *You* know how it is among the poor, Mr. Pratt."

"Indeed I do; indeed I do," said Mr. Pratt, promptly. He smiled complacently.

"Well, I'll be there at four o'clock, Dr. Peters. I'm sure people ought to be very grateful to you—taking all this trouble about things. It's my duty, of course—it's the field in which I expect—and hope—to be of service. But I'm sure it shows a very humane spirit in you, Dr. Peters, it does indeed."

. . . . . .

The little undertaker had to receive his final directions, and then the Doctor took his noonday sandwich and glass of beer at the Brasserie Pigault, and went home to write a laborious letter to Sir Richard Talbot. This task took much time, for Dr. Peters had the true American sensitiveness about risking a possible snub. He would have chatted with the first tramp he met on a country road; but he did not like to introduce himself to an English baronet, even to do the baronet a favor. Moreover, he had to make it very clear to this aristocratic stranger that he, Peters, was a disinterested agent in the business.

"Can't tell anything about Englishmen," he reflected; "he might want to 'tip me 'arf-a-crown,' or something."

It was nearly four o'clock when he went to the house of Goubaud. All preparations had been made, and his first inquiry was for the child. She was by her mother's coffin, Alphonsine told him

with sympathy both effusive and honest—the poor little one, it was heart-rending, she did not cry,—she was not a child at all—and she would eat nothing. But it was cruel! she would eat nothing at all—not even candy. Alphonsine had purchased her seven cents' worth of candy; but she would not eat it. Perhaps she would eat if M. le docteur spoke to her.

"Let her be," he said; "she'll eat when nature tells her to. She'll come to it in time—she's young. There's candy yet in the world for her. But I'll go up and see if I ain't clumsy enough to make her cry. That's much more necessary."

When he entered the room up stairs the child was sitting by the coffin, as Alphonsine had said; but she rose instantly and came to meet him before he could cross the threshold, stretching out her small hand in silence, giving him one glance as she did so, and then lowering her tearless dark eyes. It was an absolutely unchildlike greeting, and it conveyed a subtle hint that she did not wish him to come nearer to her dead.

He sat down on a chair by the door and drew her to him. She passively yielded as he put his arm about her; but when he made a motion to lift her to his knee, she stopped him with a quick instinctive little gesture. There was something of gentle, innocent rebuke in her attitude, as though he had made light of her grief.

"My dear," he began, softly and somewhat nervously, "we must take your mother away from you before very long."

"When?" she asked, without looking at him.

"The clergyman will be here at four o'clock."

"So soon?" she cried, with a little shiver, and a quick look of appeal and question.

"Yes, my dear. It's the best way. Yes, I know it's hard; but it would be harder if we were to put it off. And now you'll be a brave girl, won't you, and——"

She would not let him finish, but broke in with her oddly mature self-restraint:

"Yes. Better. I see. *They* do not want her here. It is well."

"'Tisn't that, my child. Madame Goubaud does not mean to be unkind——"

"I know. She knows not better. I comprehend, monsieur."

The Doctor felt curiously embarrassed. He wished she would act like a child. A vague idea passed through his mind, that he would like to know whether she had ever played with a doll.

"How old are you?" he asked, in perplexity.

"I have twelve years," she answered curtly. Then, after a pause, with a sudden petulance,—"I am no more a child."

The Doctor smiled. She was a child, after all.

"Well, now," he said, "I'm forty, and I'm a good deal of a child yet."

She gave him another quick, timid look, as if apprehensive of some levity or insincerity.

"Yes, my dear," he went on, holding her more firmly within his arm—she did not resist: "I'm a

good deal older than you, and I've got gray hairs—look at 'em—but I should feel sorry, I should, if I got too old to remember what it was to be a child. Gray hairs don't make a man old. I know how I felt when I was just your age, and I know just how you feel now. I lost my own mother when I was two years older than you are, and I remember all about it, as if it was yesterday. I'd like to tell you how it was."

He paused a moment.

"Shall I tell you about it?"

She kept her face averted and her eyes cast down; but she nodded assent.

"She'd been sick a long time; but when she died, it was very sudden, and I wasn't there. I've often wished since then I'd been there to kiss her good-bye, or help take care of her, or do something to show that I loved her. But I didn't know anything about it until they told me. And then I felt—I can't tell you how I felt. But it seemed to me as if I was the lonesomest boy on earth. And I didn't dare to cry, either: I'd have felt a lot better if I could have cried; but I didn't dare to. My father was a severe, stern sort of man, and he didn't believe in people's crying, or laughing, either. If I'd have cried, he'd have sent me to bed. And I couldn't stand that—lying in bed and thinking how lonesome I was. Besides, I was fourteen years old, and I thought I was too big a boy to cry."

He stole a glance at the pale face. He saw that the child was listening to him.

"Well, I went out in the yard, just to get away from the people. Folks in my time were a sort of *hard*—I don't think they quite understood us young ones—they didn't seem to care much about us. So I went out into the yard. And there was an old nigger, named Japhet, who used to chop wood for my father. Uncle Japhe, we called him. He was out there in the woodshed. And when he saw me, what do you think that old nigger did? Why, he didn't say one word—he just caught hold of me and hauled me right up to him, with an arm around my head, and my face against his ragged old coat, and he held me there, and I just *cried*—cried like a baby, and with that old nigger holding on to me. It couldn't bring mother back, but——"

She was melting. Her head was still bent down; but he could hear her breath come short and quick; and with one hand she plucked at his coat-sleeve, pinching the cloth between her fingers, letting it slip and picking it up again as if she found relief in the mechanical action.

"It didn't seem so lonesome then, when I had Uncle Japhe, for all he was only an old nigger. There's lots of help in this world, if we'll only just let ourselves be helped. Don't you think so?"

He slipped his arm around her neck, and with a sudden sob that was almost a cry, she pressed her face against his breast. But just then the door opened, and she struggled free, and stood up, her eyes moist and her teeth together,

to face the Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt.

The Reverend Mr. Pratt stood in the doorway, looking disapprovingly on two small candles that flickered at the head of the coffin. He had confided his overcoat to M. Goubaud, who stood behind him. He had moreover impressed M. Goubaud into the service of the Church; and had made the unwilling Frenchman assist him in putting on his surplice. M. Goubaud's face expressed disgust, subdued by politeness. He did not like the appearance of a Protestant clergyman in his Catholic house; and he was inclined to look on the Church of England ritual with critical contempt.

Mr. Pratt waited a moment to make up his mind that it would be inadvisable to demand the suppression of the candles, and then advanced with amiable dignity and laid his hand on the girl's head.

"You are very young, my child," he said, solemnly, "to bear such a heavy weight of affliction."

There was no answer.

"We cannot tell, any of us, why these trials are sent," he further observed, and then, becoming conscious of the little one's complete unresponsiveness, he concluded, blandly:

"I will talk with you at some future time, my child. Dr. Peters——?"

Dr. Peters answered with a look of assent. Everything was ready. The little undertaker and his assistant were posted near the door, and the household of Goubaud, domestic and operative,

had filed in and ranged along the walls of the small room; the workmen hiding their hands behind their backs, the palms outward. Alphonsine rolled her round red arms in her apron, and looked tearfully across at the little orphan, who still stood by the Doctor's side, erect and silent. She did not lean against him; but as the service went on, she let his arm draw closer about her, and when the ashes fell from the clergyman's hand upon the coffin top, she caught her friend's fingers in an impulsive clutch.

Even poor Pratt's thin voice could not spoil the beauty of the words he spoke. As his high tones rang out through the silent house, in rhythmic rise and fall, the little man seemed to take on something of the dignity of the greater spirits whose speech he echoed. Peters sat and listened, and forgot the cold little room, the dull, poverty-stricken faces around him, the ghastly pine coffin on its staring trestles: memory slipping back to the country church on summer Sundays, where the wind shook the leaves about the open casements, the birds twittered outside, all through service and sermon, while the old pastor's sonorous cadences fell on the unheeding ears of a yellow-haired boy, sitting in the front pew, his restless legs swinging half a foot above the floor, his whole boy's soul yearning to be out in the fields and the fresh air, angrily resenting the necessity of wasting a morning of sunshine and clear sky. He looked down at the subdued young face at his side, and pitied the child who had so soon learned the lesson of self-restraint

and patience. After her hand had grasped his, she let it lie there through the brief service; but she did not cry, and her eyes never once left the coffin. When the last word was said, she went unresistingly with Alphonsine, and put on her worn little hat and jacket.

There was one shabby carriage behind the shabby hearse. Mme. Goubaud, in her Sunday clothes, got in first, and took the child on the seat with her. Then the Rev. Mr. Pratt climbed in, and M. Goubaud followed. Business was dull, and the chance of riding in state as chief mourners at a funeral—even a Protestant funeral—was not to be missed. This had been Mme. Goubaud's opinion, and when Mme. Goubaud thought that anything justified an interruption of business, her husband never questioned the propriety of her decision. Her face bore a look of stern importance as she sat on the back seat of the carriage and gazed fixedly before her, ignoring a staring world.

Dr. Peters stood irresolutely on the sidewalk. Mr. Pratt looked as if he expected his fellow church-member to be one of the party; but there was no place for the Doctor, unless he took the child on his lap, and he hesitated. The driver settled it by starting up his horses, and the Doctor turned away, but not too soon to see the girl look up with pained, surprised eyes, that mutely accused him of deserting her.

"I ought to have gone," he said to himself. But it was too late, the carriage was rattling down the street after the jolting hearse, and he could

only stare at it until it grew gray behind a veil of whirling snowflakes.

"I ought to have gone," he thought, and the remembrance of that piteous look went with him all the rest of the day.

IV

HE found it hard to get rid of that look. He was not sentimental; he had always had that understanding with himself, that he was not sentimental. And there are those who would call his code of morals lax. But there were some matters in which he had an uneasy, child-like sensitiveness of conscience. To be suspected, even, of the most trivial carelessness in the payment of his debts; to be thought unkind or discourteous to children and women,—these things wounded him sorely. Not that he very greatly troubled himself about the world's opinion of him, but that any suggestion of remissness in these particulars filled him with self-accusing doubts. It was a part of his old-bachelor fussiness, perhaps.

Therefore he was troubled to think that he had left the child to the charitable offices of the Goubaud family and the Reverend Mr. Pratt, at the most trying ordeal of the day. They all meant well, those three people, but they were a good deal like the folks who had made his boyhood gloomy. They did not understand children. Being a child himself, the Doctor felt this strongly. He thought of the long, cold ride to the New Jersey cemetery; the unrelieved ugliness of the hurried interment, the probable remarks of the Reverend Mr. Pratt

on the way home, and he felt that he could have smoothed the rough path of the little girl with the long name, if he had taken her on his knee in the carriage. Well, it could not be helped now; but, all the same, he was uncomfortable. He went home and tried to work, but he made a poor hand at it.

The light was bad, for one thing, and he was not in the mood for work upon the cannon. He reflected, with some perturbation of spirit, that he had of late been conscious of a certain lack of interest in the cannon. The perfection of that invention had been his hobby for thirteen years. He had worked over it, thought over it, pottered and played with it. It had stimulated his ambition and amused him in his idleness. To be sure, it had never come to anything, and it gave no signs of coming to anything. It had changed its form over and over again, but somehow it was always a little behind the latest discoveries in gun building. The Doctor tried to keep up with the march of progress, but he was always—he frankly admitted to himself—far back in the tail of the procession. Once he had got a small appropriation from the government; and he had built his gun and taken it to Fort Hamilton for trial, and there it had burst. It had not injured any one, because, as the inventor grimly remarked, no one had had faith enough in it to stand near it when it went off. There was a flaw in the casting; it was not his fault; but the appropriation was exhausted, and the gun was untried; and before he could apply for another

appropriation, the march of progress made it necessary to reinvent the gun after the latest fashion.

He had gone at it cheerfully enough, and modeled and remodeled, and it was only recently that he had begun to feel as if his patient tinkering was but a sham sort of work.

"Great Scott!" he thought, in dismal amusement, "am I getting too old to make-believe any longer?"

It really looked as though he had reached a second time that sad period when we realize that our toys are not toys, and not—what was it that we thought them?

The Doctor's domain was extensive. Five years after his return from the war he had taken the two upper floors of the old house, on a fifteen years' lease. He had tried to get a lease for a longer term, but even the conservative old German who was his landlord knew that rents would go up as the years went on; and fifteen years was the longest period for which he would agree to let Dr. Peters have the rooms at the modest rate that they then commanded.

He had wanted a home, this lonely bachelor stranded after the great war. Bachelors sometimes want homes; they even long for them with a conscious, understanding, intelligent desire that their married friends never credit them with. "You don't know what it is to have a *home,*" says Smith, who married at twenty-five, to Jones, who is unmarried at forty. But Jones does know what

it would be to have a home, for does he not know what it is not to have a home? Ay, far more than complacent Smith, who made his nest from mere blind instinct, long before he could have become conscious of his own need of a nest—far more than happy, comfortable, satisfied Smith, does this lone bird of celibacy of a Jones know of the superiority of a consecrated abiding-place to his cold, casual twig.

There is always something comically, dismally pathetic about the bachelor's attempt to construct a home. I was once at the performance of an opera attempted by a weak little theatrical troupe that was in bad luck. The tenor had failed them at the last moment, so a good-looking supernumary stood up in the tenor's clothes while the poor hard-working, middle-aged soprano sang both parts of their duets. That is what the bachelor tries to do—to sing both parts of a duet.

It is always a failure; and so the Doctor found it. He had his bed-room, his sitting-room and his work-room, and upstairs was his kitchen and his servants' room. They were all good rooms, each after its kind. They were furnished as he liked; they were warm enough in winter and cool enough in summer. Each one had four walls, a floor and a ceiling. And yet they were not a home; and he had not been a day in them before he knew this.

For a little while he tried to discover and supply the elusive deficiency; but after a time he realized that the upholsterer could not do it for him; that it was not a matter of easy chairs, of pictures on

the walls; that the light and warmth that were lacking were not born of lamps and fires. It was a twig, after all; not a nest; and he made up his mind to it.

He had furnished his kitchen with elaborate care, reproducing, as far as memory would serve him, the generous equipment of the old Dutch household in which he had passed his boyhood. He had a fancy to install there the blackest and oldest Virginia negress that he could find; but he never carried out the scheme. The shriveled German woman whom he had engaged to "do for" him temporarily continued to do for him; and now, after eight years, it seemed probable that she would continue to do for him as long as he could sustain life on her cooking.

He threw down his tools and wandered listlessly about the rooms. In the sitting-room he noticed how faded was the green reps covering the furniture, and how worn was the old-fashioned Brussels carpet. He glanced through the open door of the bed-room. It looked what it was—a place to sleep in. No one would ever have thought of stretching out on that painfully clean and prim little bed to while away an afternoon with pipe and book. He stared out of the window at Washington Square, and saw the bare trees waiting sullenly in the gray twilight for the next snow-squall to buffet them about and rack and rattle their poor dry twigs.

All these things he observed without fairly realizing their ugliness; but with a vague sense of lonely discomfort, which he did not quite un-

derstand. It had been growing on him of late.

"Perhaps it's Luise's cooking," he thought: "I ought to be inured to it; but maybe it's like arsenic or morphine—sort of cumulative poison. I guess I'm getting dyspeptic."

He went up stairs to take a look at the kitchen and see if he could conjure up again his old dream of a "nigger cook" of his own. Perhaps that might be the salvation of his bachelor life, after all.

It was a good kitchen, there was no doubt about that. Luise had never brought out its possibilities. There was a huge range, that would have cooked a dinner for a regiment. Hanging up on the wall was the Dutch oven that he had had made eight years ago, on the model of the one in his mother's house, sketched from memory. Luise had never used the Dutch oven. There were ample cupboards, stocked with yellow crockery, bowls and pitchers and shallow dishes, more than Luise could ever use. And she grumbled at having to keep them clean. The back hall-bedroom had been fitted up for a pantry. It was quite as large as his mother's pantry; and he had fondly dreamed of filling it with jars of jam and preserves and pickles, and of ranging pallid disks of pie on the long shelves. The jars were there, along with the pie-plates—yes, there was even a great stick of sealing-wax to seal the preserves up with, in the old-fashioned way—but jars and plates were empty.

The whole place really seemed to cry aloud for a good plain cook. He pondered, as he descended

the stairs, over the problem. Could he get the cook, and would she, once got, realize his fond dreams? And—coming down to a necessary preliminary—had he the moral courage to get rid of Luise?

He was sensible of a guilty feeling of shame and fear when Luise brought him his dinner that night. He looked at her shamefacedly as he tried to make up his mind whether any other woman could be quite as ugly as she was, or whether nature held somewhere among her monstrosities and mistakes a pendant to that parboiled face.

He tried to think charitably of Luise; but there was no room for doubt about the dinner. It was simply bad. Many people like German cooking; but nobody could like Luise's German cooking. She had a way of announcing the names of the dishes, as she set them down with a vicious slam, and she had told him that the viand of the evening was a "Wiener Schnitzel." He credited her with forethought in this, for if she had not done so, he would not have been able to guess the fact that what was before him had once been a veal cutlet.

He smoked two pipes after his dinner, and then he went around to the Brasserie Pigault. For fourteen years he had gone to the Brasserie Pigault. When he first set up his bachelor establishment, he had resolved to stay at home of nights, and for a month or two the Brasserie had missed him, and he had sat in his green reps easy-chair, that was not, and never could have been meant to be easy, before his meagre little hard-coal fire. But it was not staying at home, after all; it was

only staying in the house; and by and by he went back to the Brasserie Pigault, which was a home indeed, after its sort, to him and to many another lonely bachelor.

If you put it that a man habitually spends his evenings in a beer-shop, it does not sound well. It not only suggests orgies and deep potations, but it is *low*. One thinks of Robert Burns, of the police-reports, of neglected wives waiting at home, of brawls and drunkenness and of a cheap grade of tobacco.

This is largely due to the influence of a number of estimable gentlemen who wander about this broad land, patronizing second-class hotels and denouncing in scathing terms the Demon Drink. They sternly refuse to admit any distinction between one place where liquor is sold and another place where liquor is sold. Yet I think the most vehement of these public-spirited men would be inclined to acknowledge that there is a bright side to the beer question if he could be induced to pass a few evenings, non-professionally, in such a place as the Brasserie Pigault.

True, he could not see there the red-eyed contention that furnishes him with so much useful oratorical material. No upraised bludgeon, no gleaming stiletto would gladden his eyes. No degraded specimen of humanity would point a prohibitionist's moral by going to sleep on the floor. No ribaldry would agreeably shock his expectant ears.

He would see Mme. Pigault, neat and comely, knitting behind her desk. He would see Mr. Mar-

tin and M. Ovide Marié at their everlasting game of dominoes. He would see little Potain, whose wife died two years ago, after forty-seven years of married life, and who would be more lonely than he is, if it were not for Mme. Pigault's hospitality, drinking his one glass of *vermouth gommé,* and reading all the papers without missing a column. He would see poor old Parker Prout, the artist, who has been painting all day long for the Nassau Street auction shops—they will not hang Prout's pictures, even at the National Academy—and who has come to the Brasserie Pigault to buy one glass of beer for himself, and to wait and hope that somebody will come in who will buy another for him. He would see good-natured Jack Wilder, the bright young reporter of the *Morning Record,* dropping in to perform that act of charity, and to square accounts by mildly chaffing old Prout about the art which he still loves, after forty years of servitude to the auctioneer and the maker of chromo-lithographs. He would see Dr. Peters taking his regular rations—two glasses of lager, the first of each keg—and studying the *Courrier* to keep up his French.

And on this particular night there was a rare guest to be seen under Mme. Pigault's roof, for Father Dubé came in, big, ponderous and genial, rubbing his fat red hands, and smiling a sociable benediction upon the place and all within it.

Mme. Pigault, alert and flattered, rose to welcome him, and he unbuttoned his heavy overcoat, with its great cape, and leaned on the desk to chat

with her for a moment. How was the baby and little Eulalie? And business was always good? That was to be expected. People knew where they were comfortable, and everybody was comfortable *chez Mme. Pigault.* And now he saw his good friend the Doctor sitting there. The Doctor looked as if he would like a little game of dominoes. He would go and challenge his good friend the Doctor. And yes, why not? He would take a glass of that excellent Chablis of Mme. Pigault's, that he had tasted when he had last visited Mme. Pigault. Was it so long ago as Easter? Ah, but the time goes! And an old man is slow. He cannot see his friends as often as he could wish. And Mme. Pigault, being prosperous and blessed by heaven, had no need of him. Ah, the Doctor is waiting. And Mme. Pigault will not forget the Chablis?

And so this simple-minded old priest, who knew no better than to sit down in his parishioner's *brasserie* and take a glass of wine and play a game of dominoes with a heretic, lumbered over to the Doctor's table, and struggled out of his overcoat, with Louis's help, and sat down opposite his good friend Peters. And Louis bustled eagerly about, and opened a new bottle of the Chablis, and brought the box with the best dominoes, that Mme. Pigault took from her desk; and cleaned a slate; and Mme. Pigault looked on proudly as her favorite customer and her spiritual guide shuffled and drew.

Father Dubé had come to this country at the age

of twelve; and it was his boast that his English was as good as his French, for if the English was a trifle stiff, the French was not quite academic.

"I hear," he said, "that you have been poaching on my preserves, and stealing a whole French family from my fold."

There was just a trace of the foreigner in the precision and emphasis with which he brought out the figure of speech, in conversational quotation marks. It was a joke of long standing between these two that the priest on one side and the Doctor and the Reverend Mr. Pratt on the other, were engaged in an active warfare of proselytism.

"No, sir," the Doctor answered, smiling, "I deny the imputation. The family you refer to has long been a pillar of the Church of England."

"It is for that reason, then," Father Dubé suggested, slyly, "that the French Benevolent Society has taken charge of the case. I saw Peloubet this afternoon."

The Doctor flushed a little.

"The mother was born in France, as near as I can find out; and the child certainly was. But they're Protestants, all the same."

The priest's broad hand was stretched across the table, overturning and exposing half-a-dozen of the dominoes he had been laboriously standing on end, and he gently patted the Doctor's sleeve.

"My good friend, that is all right. I know. I know. It is your 'set,' is it not?"

The Doctor smiled and flushed a little redder, conscious of his own sensitiveness.

"Double-six. Oh, you want me to keep the slate?" Father Dubé had pushed it across to him. "I say, Dubé, I'm glad you spoke of it. I want to ask you something."

"Fifteen. What is it?"

"It's about the child." The Doctor was silent for a minute, knitting his brows as he played on mechanically. "I don't know that I've done particularly well in letting the Society leave her where she is. You know that Goubaud family better than I do."

"They are decent people."

"Oh, I know that. But, you see, here's the way it is. This child's a girl—thin little thing, about twelve years old or so, and high strung—the most high-strung, old-fashioned, queer little witch I ever saw. And old woman Goubaud—well, she isn't exactly what you'd call high-strung herself."

"If I know what you mean by 'high-strung'—no."

"Nervous—sensitive—delicate—all that kind of thing. These people,—these Talbots,—seem to have been pretty poor; but they were rather a swell lot at the start, and I don't think this mite has been accustomed to any sort of rough, unsympathetic treatment. I shouldn't like to leave her there if I thought the old woman was going to make it hard for her."

"I shall have to draw." The priest shrugged his shoulders, and took a pinch of snuff, offering the box to the Doctor, who bowed, and waved it away. The proffer had been made and declined

many hundred times in the course of their intimacy. "The destruction of the poor is their poverty," the Father went on: "poverty is hard, and they have grown hard in their poverty. They do not mean it,—but—what will you have? They are poor. Why do you not send the child to your mission? Your friend, Mr. Pratt—"

"The mission's no place for a child like that. There's too much promiscuous Mary Ann and Sairey Jane there. Those tough little cats would worry the life out of her. I had half a notion of getting Madame Pigault here to take care of her up stairs. Threes, is it? Now I've got to draw. What, with stray kids and bad cards at dominoes, there's no rest for a quiet, respectable citizen. What do you think of bringing her here? It's a nice place up stairs, and I don't believe Madame Pigault will instill ideas of intemperance into her youthful mind."

"It would be well," assented the priest, after another pinch of snuff, and an interval of reflection. "But, perhaps you would do better to wait and see how the child gets along. It is only for a few weeks, I understand; and perhaps she will not be unhappy there. You must not forget that it will be much for Goubaud to have the money the Society will pay for her board. He is an honest, hard-working man, that Goubaud, and he scarcely makes enough in the year to pay his rent and live."

"I'll go round there in the morning, and see," said the Doctor, trying to dismiss the subject from

his mind: "Ten! and that's domino, I believe. My cards weren't so unlucky, after all."

. . . . . .

A strong wind from the northeast brought the faint sound of St. George's bells down to Washington Square, as the Doctor turned out of South Fifth avenue. It was as though Stuyvesant Square, snugly locked up for the night, sent a midnight message of reproach to the broader and more democratic ground whose hard walks knew no rest from echoing footsteps, in light or dark. Here the branches swayed and creaked in the night breeze, the gas-lamps flickered and winked; from time to time a tramp, or, from the foul streets below and to the eastward, something worse, in woman's shape, hurried across the bleak space, along the winding asphalt, walking over the Potter's Field of the past, on their way to Potter's Fields to be.

He had staid at the brasserie longer than was his wont, having this night a dull dread of the lonely hour before bed-time, to be spent in his green reps chair; of the dim anthracite fire, of the encompassing silence.

He heard his great key click in the locks of the outer door, and the sound was peculiarly depressing. He cut short a sigh, set his teeth, and smiled a grim smile as he toiled up the long stairs through the dead darkness. At the top of his own flight a cold, faint half-light filtered down from the skylight of the little old-fashioned dome that rose

above the stairway, built through the story above. By this dull grayness he was able to see two bundles, a small one, and one comparatively larger, lying in front of his door. As he approached, the larger bundle stood up. The Doctor started in surprise.

"C'est moi," said the figure, which scarcely reached above the handle of the door.

"What?" demanded the Doctor.

"C'est moi," the figure repeated, in a tone of perfectly satisfying explanation; and as she tried to struggle out of the folds of an enormous water-proof cloak, the Doctor realized that it was Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot.

"C'est moi," she said.

V

"WHAT is the matter?" asked the Doctor, falling back on the stock question which is the Anglo-Saxon's refuge in all cases of bewilderment, mystery or surprise.

"There is nothing is the matter," returned the girl, with composure.

"What do you want?"

"I want to enter."

She pointed to the door, her white finger just emerging from the folds of the waterproof. The Doctor unlocked his portal; she gathered up her small bundle and walked in. He followed her, leaving the door open. Within, the gas burned low, and as he stood with his hands in his pockets, stooping to look into her pale, small face, her meagre proportions seemed to him more meagre still. She looked up at him with an anxious question in her eyes, and he stared blankly at her.

"Well," he said at last, "I don't want to seem inhospitable in any way, but if you'll kindly explain——"

"I cannot stay with those Goubaud," she said, with sudden agitation.

"Have they been treating you ill?" The Doctor's gray eyes began to light up.

"No—not that. They do not mean to be bad.

But they are *different*. They are not—how you say it?—they are not like we others. La Goubaud, she say to me this morning: 'Go out. Play with the children. You get not your mother back, whether or no you are sulky. *Sois sage.* Play with the children!' " Her voice broke with an angry sob. "Me! Play with the children!" There was a woman's scorn in her voice. "Play my mother come back, perhaps? Make pretence she was not dead? She treats me in infant. I cannot bear it, monsieur. You comprehend? I cannot bear it."

The Doctor stood gazing at her in puzzled hopelessness.

"I run away to you. I pack up my things in this bag. The bag belong to la Goubaud. I take it back to-morrow. Alphonsine, she is *bête,* but she is good; she lend me her waterproof—see? so I run away to you."

She had got clear of the great garment by this time, and she shook it to the floor and stood out, thinner and smaller than ever.

"But, my dear child," the Doctor began: "you can't stay here, you know—"

"Yes! let me stay here. You will not send me away?" She clasped her hands together nervously, as she stood in front of him, her anxious, eager eyes searching his face, her mouth twitching painfully. "You will let me stay, monsieur. It is a so short time! And I shall die *there*"—with a little shudder: "I tell you, *I die* there. You let me stay. I make myself useful. I know

much, monsieur; I cook, I keep the place clean, I sew your clothes. I do all that for my parents, when they have been alive. I take care of you when you are sick. I am good nurse—very good nurse. You are sick sometimes, eh?"

She made the inquiry with painful eagerness. He smiled as he slowly shook his head; and her face fell.

"I am sorry," she said, simply; and then she beamed with sudden hope.

"I cook for you. You do not know how good I cook. Alphonsine, she tell me you live all alone; maybe you want a cook. Very well. I be your cook. Yes, I am small, I know; but you see I know how to cook—I promise you. I make you *omelette aux confitures,* same I used to make for my father. You ever eat *omelette aux confitures?*"

The Doctor pulled himself together.

"Look here," he said; "I want to have a talk with you."

"No!" she cried, imperatively, seized with a quick mistrust, "I do not want that you have a talk with me. You mean to tell me to go back to la Goubaud, eh?"

"No, I don't."

"You let me stay here—with you?" she began again, coaxingly, with wide, brightening eyes. "Just a little time—to try? If I am not good, you send me back."

The Doctor gave vent to a husky exclamation that sounded like profanity.

"Come here," he said, holding out his hands.

"No," she insisted: "you tell me what you do!"

He turned and shut the door, and the child promptly walked up to him and placed two cold hands in his. He led her to the armchair, and sat down and made her stand in front of him, while he inspected her with curious interest. Her eyes were old; but her face, in spite of its thinness and pallor, had a certain almost babyish prettiness about it, sensitive and delicate. There was enough of the mother's look in it to give promise of greater beauty. And through all her grief and anxiety, he could see traces of an expression of sweet, winsome, childish wilfulness, which suggested the innocent and instinctive coquetry of a kitten. Her hair, thick, dark, soft and wavy—the mother's hair—hung heavily around her face and down her back, and against it he saw her sallow, thin neck, with its tense cords. A scanty ruffle of cheap lace hung loosely about her throat; and he noticed her narrow chest, made yet narrower by the pleats of her shabby black frock. He looked hard at her, and she looked hard at him, and he saw that she was unmistakably in earnest.

"You shan't go back to Goubaud's, I promise you that," he said at last: "and you shan't go anywhere where you don't want to go. But as for staying here—well, I don't think that can be managed. I'm a young bachelor, you see, and I'm afraid it wouldn't be—proper."

She knit her brows.

"I did not think of that. But then, you are not young. You are not old, old—but you are not

young." Then, with a sudden illumination: "But if I am your cook, it is *proper*. A cook—that is *convenable*, monsieur."

"But I have a cook. At least,"——he corrected himself,—"she's a kind of a cook."

"She cooks bad? Very bad?"

"I guess that's about the size of it."

"Well!" she solved the problem with a definitive shrug of her shoulders, "send her away. Take me. You do not believe I can cook? I cook you a supper—*now!*"

"I haven't the slightest doubt of your powers as a cook," laughed the Doctor: "but if I discharge Luise, what am I going to do when you leave me? You'll have to go to your uncle in a few weeks."

She settled that question with the same promptitude and ease.

"I don't go to my uncle, then. I don't care. It is all the same. I stay here with you."

"But your uncle will have something to say about that."

"He don't care, either, I guess. If he take me, I cost him money. He don't like that people cost him money. He let me stay here if you say so."

"Well," said the Doctor, "we'll see about it. I don't doubt that I shall be satisfied with your cooking; but perhaps you won't like the place yourself."

She shook her head wisely.

"That is all right. I like it. Then I stay?"

"You've got to stay for to-night, sure. I

shouldn't know what to do with you, at this hour. And now I don't know where to put you."

"I go in the cook's room."

The Doctor laughed aloud.

"I guess not. There's no bed there, and it's colder than seventeen north poles stood on end. You'd freeze to death there; and you're cold enough already. Here, sit down here and warm yourself while I see where to stow you."

He got up and slipped the child into his place. Then he stirred the fire into life, and put her feet on the fender, first taking off her shoes, which were worn to such an extent that they were both picturesque and pathetic.

"Now you stay there and warm yourself, and I'll see about quarters. Great Scott!" he said, as he held up the shoes, "if you're going to be my cook you've got to get a new pair of those things, for the credit of the establishment."

If he had not been bending down when he removed her shoes, he would have seen that she colored painfully. He saw the color deepening now, and he wished he had not spoken. "Well," he went on, rather awkwardly, "I don't suppose you could have known that I made it a point to be particular about my cook's shoes—just a sort of a way I have. Now, let's see. I guess I can make you comfortable for the night, somehow or other. This is your traveling-bag?" he asked, lifting the blue ticking sack that she had brought with her. "Well, when I was down South, the boys called me 'Potato-bag Peters,' one time, because I had to tote

my traps around in an old potato-sack. Just as good, you know, as a fancy satchel, and holds a lot more. Have you got your what-you-may-call-'em in here?"

"M——?"

"Your—ah—your night things, whatever they are," he explained, hastily and uncomfortably.

The red on the child's face mounted to the roots of her hair.

"N—n——" she began, and then finished resolutely—"Yes!"

He felt himself rebuked, and he grew nearly as red as the forlorn, poverty-stricken waif in his easy chair. It was ridiculous for a veteran of the Doctor's age to flush up like a school-girl; but he did it now and then, and was always ashamed of it.

He moved about in silence for a minute or two, looking for extra bed-clothes to put on the big horse-hair sofa in the corner—the one relic of the Oneida homestead which he possessed. From the depths of a dark closet his guest heard him, after a while, calling down the vengeance of heaven upon the head of Luise; but in the end he found the mislaid drapery, and emerged with his burden. The child leaped to her feet, and, after one rueful glance at the two pink toes that peeped from her black stockings, pattered across the floor to him, and took the bed-clothes in charge as he dropped them on the floor.

"It is for *me*," she said, with feminine superiority: "you do not know how."

He had to stand aside, even his assistance

scorned, as she rapidly and neatly made up a bed on the sofa. Her easy adaptation of the means to the end gave the impression of a thorough acquaintance with the exigencies of poverty in the matter of "shake-downs."

It was all done before the Doctor could have got one sheet stretched evenly, and then she gave the completed work the two little pats and the smoothing stroke with which the true woman always polishes off her bed-making. She turned to the Doctor, and he nodded approbation.

"Now, young woman," he inquired, beginning to feel a certain familiarity with his new acquaintance, "do you suppose you could eat some crackers and cheese before you turn in?"

Again a hint of painful color crept into her wan face; but this time she looked him in the eye, and said that she could eat some crackers and cheese.

She did eat some crackers and cheese—a great many crackers and a great deal of cheese, in a way that showed that she was hungry. The Doctor went up stairs in the dark, and found some milk in the ice-box—Luise had never been able to see any good reason why milk should be fresh, when freshness involved going out in the early morning and getting a new supply—and he brought it down, and his guest made quite a fair supper, sitting perched up in the big green reps chair, with her feet to the fire, the bare toes that protruded from the black stockings occasionally drawing themselves up in modest consciousness of their unconventional nudity.

But in the middle of it all she broke down, and choked on a drink of milk, and burst into a passion of tears, crying: "O ma mère, ma mère—O ma pauvre petite mère!" The Doctor went to her side, and she threw her arms about him, but instantly pushed him away, and fumbled for her pocket, and found a poor little ball of a handkerchief, with which she mopped up her tears. Her breast heaved still, and her breath was tremulous; but she tried to take up her talk where she had left it. She had been telling him about her abilities as a cook, and she endeavored to go on and enlighten him about a certain François in a hotel at Biarritz, who had taught her to make a marvelous *tisane* for the sick. She had lost the thread of her narrative, however, and the Doctor felt it incumbent upon him to keep up his end of the conversation.

So he told her about some amateur cooking he had done in war-times—he was not in the habit of talking of war-times; but he was short of a subject—and he dilated on his enjoyment of a certain sandwich or stratified structure of crackers, pork, molasses and smoked beef, until her feminine horror at the unholy fare filled her young mind to the exclusion of deeper emotions.

Then he suggested that it was time to go to bed, and he made a move to carry her bag into his room. But she would not hear of the arrangement. Her protest was vehement, decided, and in the end it was successful. She would sleep on the sofa, and the Doctor should sleep in his own bed. And when the argument closed, the Doctor felt himself dis-

missed from the room. She did not express herself in words; but there was in her manner a distinct feminine intimation that his further lingering would be in bad taste. Conquered and embarrassed, he retreated.

But a couple of hours later he got up, slipped into his old red-flannel dressing-gown, and stole into the sitting-room to see if his charge was asleep. He only went near enough to the couch to hear her regular, soft breathing, and then he tiptoed back, turning hurriedly into his own room, as though he felt that his presence profaned the innocent maiden slumber that was a strange new thing under his roof.

. . . . . .

He woke the next morning with a glad, foolishly expectant feeling which he could not have explained to himself. He remembered, though, a similar sensation when the winter dawn looked into his narrow attic room, in the days of his boyhood, and reminded him that singing-school was to be held that night, and that he should probably see Alida Jansen home.

Ten minutes later, as he was taking his morning dip in the bath-room at the rear of the hall, he heard a sound of violent contention coming from the regions above. He paused knee-deep in the water and listened. One voice was unquestionably that of Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot. The other was what the voice of Luise might be raised to the n^{th} of dissonance by extreme rage. He had

stepped softly past the closed door of his sitting-room, as he went to his bath, for fear of waking the sleeping child; but it seemed that the child was not sleeping. He huddled on some clothes and hurried up stairs, appearing in the kitchen in his shirt-sleeves, to act as mediator in a combat that was growing fiercer each moment.

The small usurper was in position of vantage, her back to the range, her feet wide apart, planted firmly on the hearthstone, her left hand grasping a frying-pan, while her right gesticulated freely. She was talking with a fiery volubility and a command of language—such language as it was—that for the moment had silenced old Luise.

"Imbécile of a German—bête! idiot! va! If I knew to use your language for the beasts, I would tell you what you are. Go, I tell you! Nobody want you here. You are dis-s-s-charged! You have no ears then, you insane, that you stand there and mock yourself of me? Go, then! get yourself out, or I forget myself—j'te dirai des injures, you hear me! You are no more cook—I am cook——" here she caught sight of the Doctor. "Tell her she is no more cook. She will not go. Tell her she shall go. Tell her in her ac-cur-sed tongue!"

"Ah!" gasped the Doctor, himself appalled by this vigor of utterance, and too much taken aback to remember that *maudite* gains strength when translated by "accursed."

"Am I not your cook, eh? You engage me last night, eh! Then tell her that she shall go. Im-

bécile''—this triumphantly to Luise—''tu vas voir.''

The light of a great and beautiful possibility broke upon the Doctor's mind. Here was his chance, his heaven-sent chance, of getting rid of Luise forever. It would be flying in the face of Providence to neglect it. He chastened a broad grin to a pleasantly humorous smile, and said placidly:

''Yes, that's so. Sorry for this little misunderstanding; but it's a fact, Luise. This young lady —I mean, this is my new cook. I ought to have told you before that I was thinking of changing; but she arrived, rather unexpectedly, and——''

''Dot chi-yilt?'' Luise shrieked.

''That young woman, yes. Of course, I ought to have given you a month's warning; but I guess we can make it even with a month's cash—how'll that do? Sorry to lose you, Luise; but the fact is, I've come to the conclusion that I like younger cooking—see? Suppose you call on me to-night, and I'll settle accounts with you? We'll make it all satisfactory, somehow, Luise,'' he finished, feeling his heart begin to fail him.

The successful combatant in front of the fire gave her frying-pan an airy twirl of victory, and set it down on the stove with a slam. ''N-i, ni,'' she said: ''c'est fini!'' and she folded her hands on her apron, waiting for her rival to depart.

Luise stood one stricken moment speechless, and then she turned and cluttered to the door. As she

grasped the post and swung herself out, she turned to level a threatening finger at the Doctor.

"I kess you goin' crazy!" she hissed, and she disappeared.

Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot gazed at the Doctor, the flush of indignation fading from her cheeks. She bobbed her small head significantly and closed one eye in the wink of fellowship.

"Good," she said: "no more Luise!"

"But how about my breakfast?" demanded the Doctor.

"Your breakfast," she replied, looking at the clock: "it will be ready in fifteen minutes—*if* you go down stairs," she added severely. "You go down stairs, you put on your coat, you read your *journal*—you brush your hair, perhaps"—with a quick glance at the top of his head—"and I come with breakfast before you are ready."

He departed submissively and finished his dressing. The fifteen minutes had spread out to twenty, and he was just taking down his pipe to stay his stomach with nicotine, when he heard a fumbling at the door-knob. He put the pipe away guiltily, and opened to his new cook, who was nearly hidden behind the loaded breakfast-tray.

She permitted him to set it on the floor, and then she made him stand aside while she set the table. When the board was spread, he gravely invited her to a seat, and, after a moment's hesitation, in which she glanced with hungry eyes at the works of her hands, she graciously accepted, and, climbing into a chair opposite her host, she named over

the edibles, not as Luise had of old; but with the gusto of an artist.

She had not boasted vainly. There was an omelette, golden, light and tender; there were a few bits of crisp bacon; there was a bunch of radishes coyly tucked in a napkin folded to simulate a rose; there was a little pile of anchovy toast, and there was a pot of coffee, clear and strong, such as the Doctor had not tasted in many a morning.

"I kept you waiting a little," she said apologetically; "and it is not all as I would like; but it is not my fault. That Luise, she is—how you say?—untidy. She puts the things allwheres and nowheres."

The Doctor assured her that he was perfectly satisfied, and he proved it by his attention to the repast. But as he ate, it slowly dawned on his man's mind that the delicacies before him were not usually among the provisions of the uninventive Luise.

"Where did you get these—these extras?" he inquired, indicating them with a comprehensive sweep of his hand.

"I got up and went out and got them before you were awake," she answered, proudly: "I got them at Breitenbach, the grocery around the corner."

"But I haven't an account there!" he said, in dismay.

"No, I know. But I did not know what was your place, and they knew you there. They would

not believe me that I came from you, and they would send a German boy with me back, but when he came here, he has seen that it was all right, and he has left the things. You can pay, can you not? he will give credit."

The Doctor suppressed his comments on this revelation. "And that?" he further inquired, pointing to the butter-dish. It was ingeniously swaddled in a napkin, and from one corner of the napkin peeped a large carnation-pink. She blushed a little, and smiled knowingly. "Oh, that," she said; "I got that from the boy. He had it in his buttonhole; so I was very nice with him, and I asked him for it, and he has given it to me. One flower, even," she explained, "it is so good on the table. It gives the appetite."

VI

"I THINK," said the Doctor, an hour later, when he had read his paper and meditated over his pipe, while his new aid washed the breakfast-things, and made his bed and dusted the rooms, "I rather think that I'll do the marketing while you're in charge of the establishment. You can tell me what you want, and I'll get it. It's more in my line anyway, and it strikes me that—that I'm a little more up to the exigencies of the situation."

This last phrase evidently exerted on his hearer's mind the influence of the mysterious and incomprehensible. She gave it deliberate consideration, and finally felt herself safe in assenting. Perhaps, she admitted, it would be better.

They proceeded to lay out a dinner, which impressed the Doctor as being of dangerously large proportions. It began with bouillon, went on with fried smelts, rose to the height of a cutlet, and passed to coffee and cheese, through an *omelette soufflé*. The plan also involved the introduction of various vegetables.

It was arranged that the Doctor was not to be home to luncheon, whereat the new cook was pleased. She acknowledged that if there was one weak spot in her culinary education, it was in the

matter of luncheon. She kindly explained that the French system of late breakfasting rendered luncheon unnecessary, and she seemed disposed to dwell on the superiority of that plan until she found her American friend hopelessly unresponsive.

His list having been made out, the Doctor took M. Goubaud's sack and Alphonsine's waterproof, and set out. He stopped at Breitenbach's to settle his bill and dash the hopes of Breitenbach, who would have been more than glad to write Dr. Peters's name on his books. He saw Mme. Goubaud, who grumbled sourly at the flight of her boarder, even after the Doctor had paid the price of three weeks' board for Miss Talbot, out of his own pocket. He also found means of surreptitiously returning her cloak to Alphonsine, with a little cash compensation for her kindness to the child. And, when all this was done, he went off to see his friend at the rooms of the Benevolent Society.

The little secretary took a gloomy view of the young lady's contumacy. He did not see how the Society could countenance such independent action on the part of one of its wards. It was irregular and improper, and he thoroughly disapproved of it.

"We've got to do something with her, all the same, Peloubet," said the Doctor. "She can't stay with me, and she won't stay at Goubaud's, and she oughtn't to."

"W'y can she not stay wiz you?" inquired

Peloubet, in extravagant protest: "you 'ave a grand apar-r-rtment—you a-r-r so reech you don' know w'at to do wiz your monnee—w'y can she not stay wiz you?"

"Great Scott, Peloubet—I can't have a child in my place, there—especially a child of that peculiar sex."

"Bah! It is but two—t'ree wicks. She is your niece; she is come to mek you a visit. You ar-r-r old enough to be an uncle, eh?"

"I'm old enough to be most anything, I suppose," returned the Doctor, with a rather grim smile; "but I'm not the uncle of the whole Benevolent Society. There's no two ways about it. I got you into this scrape, and I'll take whatever trouble there is to be taken; but I've got to find some decent woman to look after the child, and it must be done with the sanction of the Society. It's all the same to you to whom you pay her board. It must be done, and it'll have to be done right off. If that infant settles herself down in my quarters much more firmly, I shan't be able to get her out with an ox-chain."

"Bot she mos' go w'ere we send her," said the Secretary.

"But she won't, if she don't feel like it."

"You mos' *mek* her go."

"Well, I don't know that I should want to make her go, if she stayed any longer," said the Doctor, half to himself. Then he got up to depart.

"All right, Peloubet, I'll hunt around and find a place for her, and then I'll report to you, and if

it's satisfactory, we'll transfer the young woman after dinner. I expect she'll break her heart if she isn't allowed to cook that dinner." He had told the Secretary of the child's fancy that she could be the cook in his bachelor establishment.

Dr. Peters spent the rest of the daylight in a twofold search—looking for a temporary home for his charge, and also for a cook for himself. Mme. Pigault finally helped him out of both of his difficulties. Her sister, in Harlem, would take the child to board—her sister was a milliner, and the place would be better for the little one than here where there were so many men forever coming and going—nice, respectable men they were; but, *enfin,* men. And she knew of a cook, did Mme. Pigault, a certain Élise, a French Alsatian, who was all there was of most perfect in the way of a cook.

These things being off his mind, the Doctor went home. Lodoiska Agnes looked down on him from the top of the kitchen stairway, and told him that dinner would be ready at six, and that she had caught a mouse in the trap, and had let him go again. It was only five, so he took off his coat and went to filing away in his work-room, where a little light still lingered. It was the large back-room, looking out on two vacant lots, that stretched through to Third Street. In the summer time there was no pleasanter room in all that quarter; for the yards were green and bright, and a beautiful tree stood in one of them, spreading and flourishing as fairly as if it had been miles out in the country, and serving as a screen between the

house and the noise and ugliness of the newly-built elevated railroad. But the room itself was bare and unfurnished, save for the work-bench and racks that held the odds and ends of models and castings. And the outlook to-day was not over-cheerful, for the tree was stripped of its leaves, and the trains went crashing by, their lighted windows glaring in the twilight.

He had lit the gas, and was still filing away and whistling to himself, when his cook came in. She had been setting the table in the sitting-room, and she paid him a brief visit to tell him that it was time to get ready for his dinner.

She inquired into the nature of his labors, perching herself on the largest casting that stood against the wall. He told her what he was doing; and she instantly got off the casting, and expressed her disapprobation.

Why did he wish to make a cannon, to kill people? It was cruel; it was not *gentil*. She would not like that. She did not like it.

Dr. Peters explained that cannons were useful in time of war, when one's country was attacked; but she was not satisfied. Yes, she knew all about that. The Prussians, who, she incidentally remarked, were hogs, had attacked France. She did not remember it; it was many years ago, and she was very little then; but she had been told about it, and she had seen the mischief they had done. But herself, she thought that the French were as bad as the Prussians. They had cannons, too, and they had used them, although they must

have known that it would set fire to their houses and knock down the trees and ruin everything. She did not like cannons at all. She had seen them fired, not to kill people, of course; but just to pass the time. The smoke and the flame were very pretty; but the noise was not good. If they could have the smoke and the flame without the noise—well! But for killing people—it had not the common sense. Why could he not make something else?

What should he make? the Doctor asked her. He was ready to invent anything she desired; he didn't care particularly about cannons. What should it be? She pondered awhile, and then suggested "something to eat."

This recalling her to her duties, she took herself off upstairs; and the Doctor made his simple toilet in preparation for dinner. He saw, when he entered the sitting-room, that places were set for two, from which he concluded that his new domestic was either enough of a democrat, or enough of an aristocrat, to see no impropriety in dining with her employer.

She came down, presently, bearing the soup-tureen, which she placed in front of the head of the house. She swung herself into her chair opposite him, and began a voluble discourse on the demerits of the departed Luise, as shown in the deplorable condition of the kitchen and pantry. The Doctor ladled out the bouillon, gave the culinary artist her plate, and then stared hard at his own, as he filled it. He took a spoonful and elevated it for closer

examination. It was of a fine straw-color, and the pattern on the bottom of the plate shone through in undimmed blueness. To the taste the broth suggested faintly the flavor of beef-tea; but it gave no hint of sustenance.

The monologue on the sins of Luise went on across the table; but it was less fluent, and there were awkward, conscious breaks in it. The face bent over the hot, thin decoction changed from red to white and back to red again. The Doctor said nothing; being painfully at a loss. Finally the small face was raised, and she addressed him with a brave assumption of ease, while a tear glistened in each eye.

"This bouillon is not good, I don't think. You find it thin, do you not?"

"Well," hazarded the Doctor, "it's a little that way, seems to me."

"Never mind. We will not eat it. I will take it away. The next time I will make it more strong."

She slipped to the ground, and, taking the plate from him, gathered up her own and the soup-tureen, and hurried from the room with them, clearly desirous of getting them out of sight as soon as possible. When she returned she brought the smelts. There was a perceptible decrease of confidence in her manner; but she became herself again when it proved that the smelts were good beyond cavil. They were well fried; they lay in a clean napkin, and there was a sprig of parsley so ingeniously tucked into each gaping mouth that it looked like a tiny green nosegay, of which, and

himself to boot, the smelt was making general tender.

The smelts having established their claim to respect, it was with unconcealed pride that the cook marched upstairs to get the veal cutlet. The maintenance of her social as well as her domestic functions caused long waits between the courses, but although it was ten minutes before her reappearance, both she and the Doctor felt that the success of the smelts justified her in expecting the indulgence to be accorded to an artist.

The cutlet was brown and pleasing to the eye. A paper rose grew from the island of bone in the middle. Lodoiska Agnes called her host's attention to it, and described the process of making paper roses. Then the Doctor, his eyes politely fixed on the person speaking to him, cut into the cutlet. There was a courteous smile of divided interest on his face, but it vanished as an agonized contortion swept over the child's features, and a cry of pain and horror came from her quivering lips. He glanced down where she was looking, at his knife and fork. He thought that he must have been guilty of some hideous slip, and he half-expected to see a severed finger lying in the platter. But even as he looked, the girl, with a bitter cry of shame and grief, spread out her little hands, trying to hide the dish from his sight. "No, no!" she wailed: "you shall not see it! I will not that you shall see it!"

He could not help himself; a smile came on his face. The incision had disclosed the inner depths

of the cutlet. The bread-crumb crust was browned; but below was only the hideous, livid, raw pink of uncooked meat.

There was nothing but child left in her now. In her utter humiliation and despair, she let him take her up in his arms and kiss and console and caress her after a fatherly fashion. She hid her face on his shoulder, hanging to him by the lapels of his coat, and she sobbed and moaned, and brokenly bewailed her failure, and then cried aloud for her father and mother.

He let her have it out, and when the spasmodic violence of her distress had abated, he made her sit on his knee and listen to the assurances that it was all right; that they could make a very good dinner without the cutlet; that he didn't mind it in the least, if she didn't. He pressed his lips to her hot cheeks, where the salt tears trickled down even while a faint, dim gleam of hope once more began to dawn in her eyes. He smoothed her hair, and she dried her tears with his faded silk handkerchief, and after a bit they organized a joint expedition to the kitchen, where the cutlet was stowed away under the sink, and where they made coffee, with which and the crackers and cheese, they descended to the dining-room. The *omelette soufflé* was postponed to another occasion; and they got on very well without it, and were surprised to find how far crackers and cheese could go as a substitute for a dinner.

When it was all finished, and the table was cleared off, she came readily to sit on his lap as he

smoked his pipe. Here she fell into a brown study, and, after a couple of minutes of silence, she suddenly turned to him, put her arms about his neck, and kissed him. It was an offering so deliberate, frank and sweetly declarative of affection that the Doctor blushed. She was chary of her kisses, he afterwards found out; but when she gave them, she meant them.

But she was quite willing now to be kissed, and she accepted and even invited petting with the most childlike simplicity. Like the Widow Malone, she seemed to feel that submission to an initial aggression involved and demanded full surrender. Her mature reserve had vanished with the downfall of her dignity; and she put her head in the hollow of his shoulder and nestled up to him as though she were six instead of twelve.

All the time she chattered, telling him, in a rambling, desultory way, the story of her life. And a queer story of genteel tramphood it was, full of details of curious shifts of poverty, accounts of strange lodgings and stranger companionships, tales of friendly cooks and waiters and odd vagabonds of the father's profession, and tales of unfriendly landlords and hard-hearted purveyors of provisions.

Incoherent as was her recital—and she stopped often to cry quietly over her lost father and mother—it was deeply interesting to the Doctor. It gave him pictures of a life of which he knew little, it made comprehensible to him the odd mental and moral development of this little being who

could not fairly be classed either with children or with women.

The clock struck nine—his usual hour for going to Pigault's; but he thought he would wait awhile to-night, until it should be time for the child to go to bed. Ten o'clock came, and the little one was still lying in his arms, with her head on his shoulder, and they were talking like old friends. For the time being, her reminiscences had come to an end, and she was catechizing him. She wanted to know where *he* had been, and what *he* had done, and he tried to tell her, with all the awkwardness of a man who has made it his rule in life not to talk about himself. He told her of the old homestead in the north of the state, of his stern, precise, formal father, Doctor Peters, the great man of their little town; of his mother, what little he remembered of her; of his simple, uneventful, meagre boyhood; of his brief career as a student of medicine, and then he came to the War.

Volunteer though he had been, he was a thorough-going old soldier in certain things; and it was not easy for him to begin to talk about the War. But when he did begin, he forgot himself, and now he told story after story, to which the child on his lap listened in fascinated absorption. They were only such stories of the camp and field as any veteran of the great war could tell; but they had that charm which lies in every soldier's story, and his hearer forgot her dislike of cannons and her feminine objections to the waste of human life in listening to him.

He stopped suddenly, ashamed of his enthusiastic freedom of speech. It was past eleven o'clock. He told Lodoiska Agnes that she ought to be in bed. She looked somewhat surprised; but made no remonstrance.

Sliding down from his knee, she stood a moment in meditation, and then asked:

"What is it that you want for breakfast?"

Before she had finished the question, the tears of shame came into her eyes. He gathered her up again, and told her that he would like nothing better than another breakfast just such as she had given him that morning. He had not had such a breakfast in many years, he declared, with the convincing fervor of truth, and he did not see how it could be improved upon.

"I cannot cook for you," she murmured, sadly; "I do not cook so good as I have thought I could cook."

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you what it is. I've been thinking about this cooking business, and I think I see what we've got to do. You're going away after a while, you know"—she slipped a finger into his buttonhole, and he stroked her small hand as it hung there—"and I shall have to get a cook who'll stay here. See? Now you know all about cooking—though of course you aren't just ready to take hold of a bachelor establishment and do all the work yourself—'twasn't to be expected of you. So I thought I'd engage a cook—just a plain, common cook, and you could kind of hang around and break her in—oversee her and—

and—*boss* her. You'd be the housekeeper, as it were—head of the establishment, and all that. I think it's rather more in your line. And then you could take your meals with me, quiet and comfortable. What do you think of the scheme?"

"Oh, yes," she cried, her eyes dilating, "that would be good."

"Yes," he went on, "I've engaged the cook, and she's coming to-morrow, and you can take right hold and——"

He stopped short. What was he doing? This was a pretty way to prepare her for her transfer to the milliner's in Harlem. He had been voicing a wild fancy, and he had not realized how far he was going. She saw his embarrassment.

"Why do you stop? Go on."

"Well," he began, feebly, "I was just thinking——"

"What?"

"Well—you mightn't like the place."

"Oh, yes," she said with decision: "I will like it. I would like to stay with you. I like you better than any one—except—except——"

He drew her closer to him in token of understanding; but he did not attempt to account to himself for a certain internal wincing that he felt at the clause of limitation. The human animal is naturally and healthily a jealous animal.

"It is then omelette and anchovy toast?" she concluded, considering the question settled. "And you like the radish always, eh?"

He felt pitifully weak as he assented, promising

himself that to-morrow he would tell her that she must go away.

"Good-night," he said, as he rose. She frankly lifted up her mouth to be kissed, and as he bent over her he wished in his soul that he had done his duty and had it over. He felt almost like a traitor as he touched her lips, thinking of what he was hiding from her.

When he was in his own room, he sat down on the edge of his bed and pondered. What was going to happen to-morrow, when he told her that she must leave him? She evidently had no idea of anything of the sort. Even the going to Europe was to her something remote, not worthy of present consideration. His conscience troubled him. He had done wrong in letting her tie herself up to him and to this temporary home. What would she think of him when he sent her up to the milliner's shop in Harlem? And what would she think of the milliner's shop? He had once seen Mme. Pigault's sister—a busy, fussy, commonplace little Frenchwoman; not at all like good Mme. Pigault. She was only a modified, improved and prosperous Mme. Goubaud. He felt instinctively that the child would not like her.

Well, it was of no use, his sitting there and thinking it over. The thing must be done to-morrow, and another time he would be more careful. But, he reflected, in mingled relief and regret, he was not likely another time to encounter another Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot.

He rose, and was about to begin undressing,

when he noticed that his dressing-gown was missing. It always hung at the foot of the bed; but he remembered that he had left it in the bathroom that morning when he went up to arbitrate the quarrel between his two cooks, and that he had subsequently seen it in the sitting-room, where Lodoiska Agnes had draped it picturesquely over the end of the sofa.

He tapped at the door. There was no answer, and he opened it softly and slipped in. The gas was still burning, and there, before the fire, the child sat in his big armchair, toasting her bare feet. She was wrapped in the red dressing gown, which stood out in hideous discord with the green reps.

"Well, I'll be—blest!" exclaimed the Doctor; "aren't you in bed yet?"

Startled, she jumped down and faced him, huddling the too ample garment about her in a way that suggested a desire to conceal some more intimate deficiencies of attire.

"No," she said, "I am not fatigued. I go to bed always—twelve, one o'clock sometimes."

"Not here you don't," the Doctor corrected her vigorously: "if you want to stay here you've got to turn in when the drum beats. Pile right into bed, young woman, and leave that article of clothing where I can get at it, or I'll have to tie a blanket around me to get to my bath in the morning."

She turned obediently to the couch, which she had already prepared for the night.

"All right. You come back in two seconds, you find it there, on the chair."

She waited for him to go, but he lingered in a new perplexity.

"I say," he commenced, hesitatingly, "aren't you in the habit—I suppose you are—but—don't you generally say something before you go to bed?"

"Say what?"

"Why, say a prayer, or something. Most people do it—when they ain't grown up," the spirit of truth compelled him to add.

She opened her eyes, and shook her head.

"No—not me—never."

"Didn't your mother teach you to say your prayers?"

She shook her head again, bewildered.

"No."

He felt dimly that a moral responsibility devolved upon him, and that he was not quite up to it, at the moment. He turned away in uncomfortable irresolution. She called him back.

"You want me to say prayers?" she asked.

"Why—yes. Seems to me it would be better."

"All right, if you want."

And in an instant she had dropped on her knees, the great red dressing-gown puffing out around her, and before the Doctor could quite grasp the situation, she had rattled through an "Ave Maria, gratia plena." Then, still on her knees, she looked up at him and calmly inquired, "How many?"

"That's enough," said the Doctor, and returned

to his own room. "Maybe it's too much," he reflected. He had no idea of taking her religious training in hand; but when he fell asleep, a little later, his brain was drowsily working to reconstruct the exact wording of a simple formula of his childhood, which had somehow slipped his memory in the course of years, and which began:

"Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

Yes, he had actually forgotten the third line. He knew the Ave Maria better. He had heard it oftener in sick-rooms and hospitals. Oneida County was a long way from the French quarter of New York.

VII

PELOUBET was more discouraging than ever when Dr. Peters informed him that he proposed to make the Talbot child his guest until her relatives sent for her. The Doctor had come to this decision while smoking his after-breakfast pipe. He had debated the question within himself all night, and had satisfied himself a dozen times over that there was nothing to do but to order Lodoiska Agnes to put herself in charge of the milliner. He was considering ways and means of avoiding or mitigating the necessarily consequent "scene," when it suddenly dawned upon his mind that he had not the slightest intention of doing anything of the sort; and, greatly relieved in spirit, he marched off to Peloubet to tell him so.

Peloubet was really doubtful this time. He had made the suggestion the day before, but it was only in a jocular way—just as he had talked about the Doctor's vast wealth. This serious acceptance of the idea staggered him. He was a good, sensible, liberal-minded man, but he was a Frenchman, and he had a Frenchman's ideas and prejudices. The Frenchman in him had a struggle with reason and experience before he gave his grave and dubious consent. After all, though, there was nothing to be said against the proposition. Dr. Peters could

have qualified in any court as a proper guardian for the child—and it was a saving to the Society. "You will ripport ev-ver-y wick, eh?" he said: "Eet is a fo'malitee—jos' write me a line—I put it on ze file."

The temporary guardian of Lodoiska Agnes felt an almost boyish light-heartedness as he trudged from butcher to baker, and from baker to grocer, that cold, sharp, clear morning, executing domestic commissions. He felt that he was having fun; that he was going to have fun. Perhaps he felt also that he had not behaved exactly like a rational, sober, sensible man, forty years old; but the boy in him rather enjoyed its own assertion of independence. He was not at all sure that he didn't want to run away from the man of forty, and forget his dull adult rule.

He was at home by one o'clock, with his arms full of bundles, and when he reached his hallway, he whistled "Boots and Saddles" up the kitchen stairs. There was no reply, and then he remembered that he had a parcel to stow away in his own room. He put it on the upper shelf of the closet, and went up stairs after Lodoiska Agnes. She was not in the kitchen. "Here! young woman!" he called, and glanced vainly into the pantry. He waited for the answer that did not come, and then he looked in the servant's room, in front. There was no trace of the small housekeeper. He ran down stairs and glanced through the rooms. She was not there. He looked hastily in every corner, but she was not there. Up stairs again, he called

her, and got no answer. "Here! young one!—you—Lo-do-is-ka!" he cried. Perhaps she had gone out on some errand. But just then he remembered that her outer garments, which were a jacket and a little black straw hat, were still at Mme. Goubaud's. They had been hanging in the old woman's room when she took her flight, and Mme. Goubaud had promised to send them around, and had not kept her promise. He knew that, for Alphonsine had come out to thank him as he passed through Houston Street that afternoon, and she had bewailed her mistress's bad faith. A sick feeling came over him. He looked around to see if a window was open. What a fool he was! Probably the child had gone down stairs to scrape acquaintance with the tenants of the lower kitchens. Yes, that was it. She was lonely, and she had gone down stairs. He would descend and see. Then came the thought that he might not find her there, and he cast one more hopeless glance into the depths of the pantry.

When Dr. Peters had first undertaken to imitate, on the top floor of a New York lodging-house, the New Netherlands homestead kitchen of his boyhood, he had a vivid memory of his mother's pickle-jar. That memory represented it as a stoneware crock of colossal size. He pictured it to incredulous dealers as being about a yard in diameter. They one and all assured him that no such crock had ever been known in the New York market. He expressed his unflattering opinion of the New York market, and continued his search.

Finally, an enterprising man had one made for him. It came, about a year after his plan of housekeeping had faded into an unsubstantial dream. It was twenty-four inches across the top, and stood nearly three feet high. He then perceived that the family of a Biblical patriarch could not have needed such a pickle-jar. And he remembered also that he had never cared much for pickles. He paid the bill, and he put the crock on its side, in a corner of the pantry's lowest shelf. There it lay, year after year, doomed to be forever pickle-less.

There it lay now, with Lodoiska Agnes in it. She was seated on a stool, her head and shoulders and arms within the vast hollow of that crock. The Doctor, his heart suddenly light once more, went to her and gently pulled her out. She had been crying; her face was wet with tears and her hair was wildly "mussed."

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Maman," she replied, simply.

She cried a little more on his shoulder, and consented to be comforted. "I was alone," she said, "and I wanted to be in the night."

He lavished caresses upon her with a warmth that she did not quite understand, and that was something of a revelation to the Doctor himself. He told her eagerly how the Benevolent Society had consented to let her stay with him until her uncle should want her. She listened, but with no great interest. She had never contemplated any other order of things. He told her more about

Élise, who was coming that afternoon. He had stopped at Mme. Pigault's to get the bundle now in his room; but he said nothing about that.

Soon they were chatting cheerfully over their housekeeping schemes. He made a diversion to tell her how frightened he had been when he could not find her; and he remembered how he had struggled with her polysyllabic first name.

"By the way," he asked, "what am I going to call you?"

"My name? Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot. It is long; but it is nice, don't you think?"

"Yes, I know;" and he laughed: "it's a nice name; but it won't do for family use. 'Lodoiska' is too long, and I don't know what to call it for short, and you don't seem to me to be 'Agnes,' somehow; and I can't call you either of the Hunts."

"'Lodoiska' is a nice name," she observed, gravely.

"Yes, but it's altogether too much of a name for a little midget like you."

"What is a midget?" she inquired.

"Why—" he hesitated: "a midget—a midget is a little thing like you."

She was standing before him as he leaned against the table, holding her hands. She certainly was very small.

"Why," he went on; "you're not even a midget —you're a midge."

"'Midge,'" she said, giving the word a curiously

pretty little French turn, "'Midge' is a nice name."

"It's not usually given to girls, though. What —what did—what are you usually called?"

"*Cherie,*" she said, "or *petite,* or—you know—just some name like that. They said that same thing what you said about Lodoiska—it is too long. I think you call me 'Midge'—I like that name. It is not everybody has it."

"I should think not," he assented, smiling. "'Midge'—'Midge'—well, it isn't so bad. We'll try it."

"And now," she began, looking calmly up at him, "what I call you, eh?"

"My name is Evert Peters."

"*Doctor* Evert Peters?"

"Well, they call me so."

She reflected.

"'Doctor,'" she repeated: "I like not that. It is too much physic. Peters—no. I call you Ev-ert."

He smiled at the dainty un-English accentuation.

"Ev-ert," she said again: "Yes, that is good. I call you Ev-ert."

The innocent audacity of the idea caught his fancy. How many years it was since any one had called him "Evert"! and it had a pretty sound as she spoke it. Yes, she should call him "Evert"—for three weeks.

"'Evert' it is!" he said, gayly, and caught her up and kissed her.

. . . . . .

Élise came later in the afternoon, a tidy, grizzled little woman, with a face like a small and well-disposed gargoyle. The housekeeper was pleased with her, and they got on pleasantly together, setting amiably to work to prepare dinner.

The result of the collaboration was satisfactory. At six o'clock the Doctor and the Midge sat down to a modest, but well-cooked meal, the serving whereof, having been left to the Midge, was graced with numerous refinements, unsubstantial in themselves, but appetizing in conjunction with the labors of Élise. She herself called his attention to them, with frank pleasure in her skill, and gave him hints of the way in which these accomplishments had been acquired.

There was a napkin folded so as to resemble a snail-shell, with the snail's horned head peeping out.

"*That,*" she asserted, "is a—what is then the word in English?—*a chef-d'œuvre.* The other things all the world can do; but that is the Art, you understand—that is an invention. It was Alcide who inventioned that. Alcide was our waiter at the hotel at Nice. Not at Mme. Cavelli—that was the little *pension*—boarding-house—where we went first—but up at the hotel. We have gone there after Papa had his great luck at Monaco."

"Eh?" broke in the Doctor, with his fork poised in the air.

"He made much money at Monaco—at the Bank.

Three thousand *francs*. It was not for long. He had bad luck next week."

"Gambling?"

It was her turn to say "Eh?"

"What do you mean by 'luck'?"

"Oh! He made money at the play—at the table. They play cards there—thousands—oh, thousands of people, all at the same time. Sometimes they make much money. Most times they lose. The bank makes all the money most times. It is amusing."

The Doctor distinctly heard the call of duty.

"In this country we think it's wrong to do that—to play cards for money."

"You think that? That is amusing, too," she said, with pleasant indifference.

The Doctor was silent. He felt himself helpless. He did not try to illuminate with the rushlight of an impromptu disquisition on the sin of gambling the vast moral darkness that this answer revealed. But he tried to sound the profundity of her ignorance; and he led the conversation by slow degrees to the subject of religion, and made some desultory inquiries into the faith of her parents. The topic did not interest the Midge, and she gave him but scanty information before she skipped away to some more congenial theme. Maman was a Catholic, she said; but she did not go to confession. Maman said *that* was superstitious, and Papa said so too. Papa was a Church of England man. That was the only church for a gentleman, he said. He did not go to church, of course;

there were no churches of that kind anywhere they had been. Yes, that was strange; but Papa said there were none. Papa knew a great many priests. He liked them when they played piquet. She liked them too, herself. Père Mathieu was very nice. He always gave her bonbons. Sometimes he brought the bonbons in the same pocket with his tobacco, and that was not nice. But it was good of him, all the same. Père Mathieu drank too much wine. And then she asked the Doctor if he did not think it was bad to drink too much wine.

At nine o'clock he told her that he was going around to the Brasserie Pigault for an hour. The announcement was made with some awkwardness; but it was received with a cheerful submission that rather disappointed him. If he had known more of womankind, it might have put him on his guard.

She got him his hat and coat, and she mentioned a number of small occupations with which she proposed to while away the period of his desertion. She accepted her prospective loneliness meekly and uncomplainingly, making no manner of remonstrance. But when he left her, she stood at the head of the stairs and watched him go. He reached the lower hall and lingered a moment to hear her turn back in his room and shut the door. But he caught no sound from above, and he went out with the uncomfortable feeling that the lonely little figure was still standing there, at the top of the stairs, looking down the way he had gone.

The comforts of the Brasserie Pigault did not appeal to him that evening. He had gone there as a matter of principle, feeling that there was something weak in breaking up his regular habits, even to please himself. Yet he could not enjoy his beer while he had the unpleasant feeling that took possession of him as he thought of the lonely Midge at the top of the dark stairs. He refused to play a game of dominoes with Mr. Martin, and then he felt still more uncomfortable, as he saw the poor old gentleman sit watching the door, in hopes that M. Ovide Marié, or some other friendly soul, would come in to play with him.

Dr. Peters read two columns of editorials in one of the morning papers. When he had finished the two columns, he found that he had paid no attention whatever to the meaning of the words. He was thoroughly dissatisfied with himself. He decided to go home and go to bed. It was early, of course; but then he could stroll slowly back, and perhaps walk a few blocks up Fifth Avenue. It was a fine night, and not cold. The brasserie was close and warm. A saunter in the open air would be just the thing for him. But when he was once in the street, he walked home as straight and as fast as he could.

The Midge welcomed him with a kiss, making him bend down so that she might put her arms about his neck. His attitude was symbolic, and he recognized the fact. He knew why he had come home; he knew that she knew it, and he felt that he was being rewarded for good behavior. It was

his turn for submission. He accepted his subjugation in penitent gladness.

She invited him to sit down in the easy-chair, and she climbed on his knee and tucked her head under his ear; and they sat there chatting for an hour. She treated him to various small caresses from time to time. It was very pleasant; but he remembered the case of the butcher's boy, and he began to have a dim idea of what she meant by "being nice" to people. It disturbed him a little. He had not known that they began so young.

Lacking any positive knowledge on the subject, the Doctor concluded that half-past ten was a good hour for a child of twelve to go to bed; so at half-past ten she prepared her temporary couch, by his orders. Then he sent her into the hall-way to turn out the gas, and he made a hurried trip to his own room and back. After he had bidden her good-night, and had closed the door behind him, she found on her bed a package. Mme. Pigault had acted as the Doctor's agent in purchasing the contents. They supplied certain crying needs in the Midge's wardrobe. Presumably they answered their purpose. But never, not on the morrow, or at any time thereafter, did she make the slightest mention of them.

. . . . . .

It was not three days before the Doctor woke to an uneasy consciousness that he had made a grave misstep. He had to acknowledge to himself that an attachment of the affections was beginning to

bind him to this waif who must in a couple of weeks be sent across the ocean to her natural guardians and protectors. And when he admitted to his reason that the attachment was growing, within his heart he knew that it had grown—the mischief was done. And the worst of it was—*she* was the worst of it. There was nothing of the coxcomb about Dr. Peters. He was rather modestly distrustful of all proffered affection, from man, woman or child. He knew, moreover, how often a child's fondness is a mere cat-like adaptation to agreeable conditions. But he perceived in this child an ardent temperament and a precocious decision of character that gave her likes and dislikes the weight and value of maturity. And that she was seriously fond of him, already, there was no doubt. She was a waif, and she was tying herself up to him as the one thing stable and trustworthy in a stormy world.

Seeing all this, dreading the parting close at hand, he proceeded to make the situation worse day by day. When a strong will is once handed over to the control of the ill-regulated affections, those beggars-on-horseback are wont to ride their prey pretty hard. With a complete abandonment of discretion and common-sense, Dr. Peters devoted all his time to the society of a weird, strange, heathenish infant, of foreign extraction, who did not belong to him, and who had dangerously clinging ways about her.

After his overthrow on the second evening after her arrival, he made up his mind to give up

the Brasserie Pigault during the Midge's stay. Pretty soon he found that he was giving up everything else in the way of individual initiative. If he went to walk, he took her with him. If he worked at his gun, it was only when she condescended to perch on his work-bench and chatter to him. Work was neglected when it struck her vagrant fancy that they both would be better employed looking in the shop-windows on Broadway, or inspecting the steamers at the West Street piers.

It was very foolish; it was worse than foolish, he guiltily admitted to himself when he thought it over at night, after the little one had gone to bed. It was a self-indulgence likely to bring cruel consequences.

Look at it whatever way he might, he could only reproach himself. His conscience told him of the wrong he was doing the child, and his reason had no adequate excuse to offer. True, he had been lonely. He had not known the measure of his own loneliness until her advent opened his eyes. She filled his days so full of bright companionship that he began to realize how empty they had been before she came; how much emptier they would be after she had gone. And yet—did he want to keep her with him? No, he had to answer himself. How could he take charge of this untutored mind, assume the vast responsibility of her education, moral and mental, take upon himself the burden of shaping her life? Of course, there was no need of thinking of it—it was not a possibility to be

considered—but if even in the speculation of fancy he was forced to acknowledge that he did not care to have the child for his own, what right had he to treat her as though she were indeed his?

But ten days slipped away, and two weeks, before he finally cast up accounts with himself. He had made two or three attempts to hold her off at arm's length, by way of preparing her for the approaching separation. They had been pitiful failures. She had only nestled the closer, each time. And now, he reflected, it was too late. The order of separation must come in a week. Conscience should be silent for that week, while he and the Midge enjoyed their comradeship. And conscience acquiesced with base and treacherous readiness, until three days or so before the letter from Europe was due, rising up then to torment him with refreshed vigor.

The letter should have arrived on a Saturday. It did not come then, nor on Monday, nor on Tuesday. He felt nervous and unstrung. He took to excessive smoking. The Midge concluded that he was sick, and consoled him with caresses which he received in shame and abasement of spirit. He wished the letter would appear, to end the matter; but he clung to each hour of suspense, and when it turned up on Wednesday, he was no more ready for it than he had been a fortnight before.

It was a brief letter; but it was clear and explicit. Sir Richard Talbot did not feel himself in a position to undertake the care of Mrs. Hugh Tal-

bot's child. He had already extended to his unfortunate brother all the assistance in his power. The claims upon him were such that he did not feel justified in going to any further expense. He begged leave to inform Dr. Peters that his brother's marriage had been made against the wishes of his family, and that he, Sir Richard, could not consent to consider himself as in any way responsible for the maintenance of his brother's child. If, however, the child could be placed in a respectable orphan asylum, not under the charge of Romanists or Dissenters—this was a positive condition—Sir Richard would pay any necessary fees. If Dr. Peters would communicate with Sir Richard's lawyers, whose address was enclosed, he would find them fully advised. They would also be prepared to make good to Dr. Peters any expenditure of money or time which he might have been obliged to make on account of the child.

"By thunder!" said the Doctor to himself, "he did want to 'tip me 'arf-a-crown,' for a fact."

Sir Richard's niece came into the room while the Doctor was tearing up the letter and dropping the pieces into the fire.

"Midge," he said, "how would you like to stay with me—I mean for good and all—forever?"

"But certainly I will stay with you forever," she said, rubbing her cheek against his coatsleeve: "What is it you have thought?"

"I thought you were going to your uncle in England."

She pursed her lips and shook her head in airy, contemptuous negation.

"No," she said, "I never have meant to go there. I have meant to stay with you."

VIII

IT was done. The move was made, and, like a wise commander, the Doctor burned his ships without procrastination. That day he called upon Peloubet, and the next day Sir Richard's lawyers were notified that the child was in charge of the French Benevolent Society, and that she would be properly cared for without cost to Sir Richard. And the lawyers informed their client of this fact, and frankly advised him to take no further steps in the matter. He took none.

The Doctor went before the Board of Control of the Society, established his respectability and responsibility, and was formally made the guardian of Lodoiska Agnes Hunt Hunt Talbot. And then, to finish his work, he took the Midge to Mme. Pigault, a dressmaker was called in, and the three of them "confectioned" a wardrobe. The Midge had a voice in all that was said, and the wardrobe did not lack the stamp of her individuality. She wanted to have some mourning dresses; but the Doctor emphatically objected, and so she gave up the idea and went in for artistic arrangements of red ribbon.

So it was finished; the last scruple of conscience was satisfied; there was no act left undone in formal confirmation and establishment of his im-

pulsive adoption of the child. What he had undertaken hastily he had carried out with honest deliberation. And now he could afford to ask himself about the wisdom of it.

There is, I believe, a disease known as "engaged-fright." It is said to attack young men and women who are betrothed, when they realize that in the game of matrimony they have put their stakes upon the table, and the wheel is spinning. In some instances, it forces them to snatch their money back, and withdraw from the game. But in the majority of cases, they struggle against the sensation, feeling that they have gone too far to get out honorably or comfortably, and they leave it to time and married life to "pinch into its pilulous smallness the cobweb of pre-matrimonial acquaintance." Thus do many blunder into happiness.

The Doctor's feelings were not unlike those of a very unsettled young man in wholly different circumstances. If his doubts could have affected his action, he would have been positively unhappy. But he reflected, with a shameful satisfaction in the moral weakness of his defense, that, for better or worse, the matter was settled; he had only to do his best, and trust that all would be well.

But doubts rose up to harass him in such numbers that in the midst of his trouble he had a humorous suspicion of the morbid and fantastic nature of their origin.

No possible suggestion of future misfortune was spared him. What did he know, after all, of this

child? What inherited traits might she not have that would cause him trouble hereafter? What ugliness of character might she not develop, to put herself outside of his affection and regard? And even if she were all that she should be, what guarantee could he give himself that his own fondness for her would not some day wear out in the selfishness of age? Was he not unwise to open the gate of that quiet garden-plot of his life, to let in a stranger from the street, who would share with him his secluded walks? Had he not been in sole possession too long to bear such intrusion with lasting good grace?

He asked himself such questions as these. He even went further, and questioned the sincerity and genuineness of the child's affection for him. From this he came back to sanity, when he perceived the depths of cynical speculation in which the idea involved him.

But when the unprofitable self-torment was put aside, enough remained to worry him. The Midge had shown no evil tendencies whatever; but she dwelt serenely in an atmosphere of pagan unmorality, doing right only by natural impulse and an innate sense of ethical good taste. He did not feel sure that he was competent to undertake her education; and if he were, he did not know where to begin.

The time to come dismayed him. In ten or a dozen years she would become of marriageble age. Where was he to find her a husband? The Doctor was not socially ambitious, nor given to overmuch

observation of class distinctions; but he could see that his little circle of casual acquaintances was not likely to furnish forth an eligible husband for a young woman of rather delicate clay. And if she did not marry, what then? When he himself came to die, at sixty or seventy—the Doctor thought that he would be ready to die at sixty or seventy—was he to leave her in mature but unprotected maidenhood?

When a man is in a morbid state such as this, and is trying to keep his internal irritation to himself, a chance abrasion from the outside penetrates his self-consciousness with peculiar cruelty. He feels that the world knows, or is likely to know, what a pitiable thing he is; and every trifling annoyance to his pride seems like a wound at the hand of malicious contempt. Madame Pigault unwittingly stabbed the Doctor under the fifth rib, and he himself gave the blade a twist.

He had dropped in to pay the dressmaker's bill, and lingering a moment to chat, for he felt somewhat of a deserter under the Pigault roof, his awkwardness in his new position betrayed him into a clumsy jest.

"I feel rather strange, Madame Pigault," he said, "entertaining a young lady in my bachelor's hall. But I guess I'm old enough. You don't think people will talk, do you?"

"What shall they talk?" demanded Mme. Pigault, with sympathetic warmth. "They can only say that you are very good. We other women, we will not speak bad of you. It is not

every man, *voyez-vous,* Monsieur le Docteur, who is generous like you. We know that—we know what they are, the men. May the good God have pity on us! But we know what they are. They will only say you have behaved noble."

The Doctor murmured a confused acknowledgment, and digested the compliment when he got out in the street. His cheeks burnt when he understood it.

"I'm damned," he said to himself, "if they ain't beasts!"

They were aliens and strangers. He had lived among them for fifteen years; but they were aliens and strangers, after all. He could never be quite at home with them; they could never be to him exactly as his own people. There was always a difference—a something at bottom that was irreconcilable with perfect understanding or friendship. Here was this woman, a religious woman, a good wife, a good mother, calmly and as a matter of course putting this hideous interpretation on his simple action. Had they, then, no decent, natural clean-mindedness? He remembered how in his boyhood he had walked to morning church by his mother's side, and how they had passed the French Canadians who formed a little colony near by, strolling home from mass. His mother had looked the other way as they went by; but he had stared at them in contempt mingled with a certain awe at the audacity of creatures who could dare to live and breathe, and yet refuse to conform to the correct standard of Protestant

America. Was there not, indeed, some justification for his childish narrowness of mind? Was not the stamp of a hopeless inferiority upon the race?

He was vexed and hurt; but after a while his sense of justice asserted itself. He had convicted Mme. Pigault of wronging him with an unclean suspicion; but he had to give her credit for the charity that pardoned the imputed sin, and cordially approved the supposed penitential reparation. He could not help thinking that he was lucky to live in a community where such a misunderstanding could not possibly put an innocent child under a cruel social ban.

He had another remembrance of Oneida County. He remembered when Injun Jane came down from the Reservation to sell baskets. She brought her boy with her, and none of the boys of the town would play with him. Everybody knew that he was the son of Pete Doolittle, who owned the farm back of the Peters's, and who had also a family of young Doolittles, born with the sanction of society and religion. But nobody would play with Injun Jane's Joe, and so while she sold baskets at the kitchen door, he stood alone in the road, a bright, slim boy, not much browner than the other country-bred youngsters, noticeably different only in his black, coarse, straight hair, like a colt's mane. He was proud and silent, and he made no attempt to speak to any of them; but twanged his wonderful snakewood bow and sent arrow after arrow through a knot-hole. It was his one form of silent

self-assertion, and the other boys in their hearts envied his skill, as they hung over the fences and jeered at him as loudly as they dared to. Evert Peters had been one of those mean boys in his time, and he thought of it with shame. Yet he knew that it had not been from inborn meanness in him, or in Visscher Jansen, or in Phil Doolittle. They had merely reflected the sentiment of the elder community. It seemed that there were expansions of Christian charity in the French quarter of New York that were unknown in Oneida County.

There were plenty of annoyances for the Doctor, in his new capacity of guardian; but he did not doubt and suffer wholly as one without hope. He might arraign himself for his unwise soft-heartedness; but he continued to be soft-hearted, and he enjoyed the consequences. He felt that he was having a good time, a better time, in every way, than he could ever remember before. Viewed as a responsibility, the Midge undeniably caused him uneasiness; but considered as a companion, she was unmixed and unlimited fun. Even when the companion gave way to the fatherless, motherless child, and she sobbed on his shoulder, her personal grief never put her apart from him. He had always the knowledge that his love and tenderness were a consolation to her, and her every outburst of grief for those she had lost made her somehow more his own.

She had, moreover, in her vehement, earnest nature, a faculty of feeling one thing at a time

which helped her greatly through the first hard weeks. When she put aside her sorrow, she devoted herself to what she had in hand wholly and thoroughly. When she thought of pleasing or serving her protector, she gave him her eager affection to the utter exclusion of every other interest. He got into the habit of slipping in to look at her an hour or two after she had gone to bed, and he often found her awake and crying softly to herself. But when he sat down by her side and began to soothe her, she resolutely dried her tears, and turned her whole attention to him, and he became, for the time, the one important being in her small world. So her housekeeping, which was something between work and play, was all-engrossing while she was about it. Her sense of loss was loyally strong and lasting; but its manifestations were intense and exclusive, and when it had found its relief, she took up her new life in the same spirit of loyalty.

She certainly put her whole soul into the furnishing of her bed-room. It was the large back room. The Doctor had given it up to her, and had taken his models and tools to the front hall-room up stairs. This was only a temporary arrangement, so far as his work was concerned; but he had come to the conclusion that it would be well to let the work go, for a little while. He would come back to it with a fresh zest, and he might thus accomplish more. And he was not quite certain in his own mind whether it was worth while to go on with the cannon or not. His original idea

seemed to have grown antiquated. And at one time he had had some notion of trying to simplify the mechanism of the sewing-machine. Perhaps it might be wise to look into the sewing-machine question once more. At any rate, he could do nothing until the Midge was really settled, and their various plans of home-making were carried out.

The room was certainly very pretty when the Midge at last took possession. He was surprised to see how his own conception of what a room should be had been disregarded with pleasing effect. There was a Frenchy chintz-pattern paper on the walls, with a darker dado—this was the Doctor's first experience of a dado—and there were curtains and portières of cretonne. Cretonne and portières were also new words to him. He could not quite remember how these things had been done. The tradesmen had suggested them, to the best of his remembrance; the Midge had approved, with a prompt exhibition of easy familiarity with such matters; he had disapproved, and, somehow, there the things were, and he was satisfied. He had wanted black walnut furniture, and had sternly objected to mahogany with brass trimmings as being old-fashioned; but he had yielded to the supercilious scorn of the dealers and the strong backing the Midge gave them, and there was the mahogany and brass, just like that which he had seen in his boyhood, except that it was more shiny. There was only one thing in the room that he had bought uncontrolled and unaided, and that

was the brass bedstead, with its light chintz-draped tester. And he never would have bought that if the Midge had not casually and artlessly described such a bed, which she had seen in a stolen peep into the apartments of some royal personage in a French watering-place hotel.

The general effect was creditable to the Midge. He had had to chasten her somewhat extravagant taste in certain particulars. She had expressed a yearning, repressed at his especial desire, for white and gold; and he felt that he had not been too firm. He had been obliged to deny her a bisque clock, representing a pannier of roses; and he had stood out against a waxed floor. But, looking on the work as a whole, it dawned upon him that the Midge had some lights in matters of taste which had never been revealed to his artistic consciousness.

Yet there were some of her fancies that were quite incomprehensible to him. While they were in the way of furnishing, they made some radical changes in the sitting-room, to its great improvement; and for the uneasy easy-chair of faded green reps, they substituted a leather-covered structure that was as comfortable as it was big. But the Midge insisted on taking the discarded piece of furniture into her pretty, new room, and, despite his protests, she had a slip-cover of chintz made for it, and put the ungainly thing in a sunny corner by the window and sat in it to sew and to study.

For she had begun a course of study. She had at first expressed a doubt as to there being any-

thing left for her to learn; but after a test examination, the Doctor had become convinced that not only must her education be taken in hand at once, but he must take it in hand himself. No school was fitted to cope with such a bewildering combination of knowledge and ignorance. In simple arithmetic she had great proficiency. She could calculate with marvelous rapidity in French, German, English and American currency. She had, so to speak, an empirical knowledge of European geography. She could read fluently in French and English. But she had never regarded it as necessary or expedient to learn to spell in either language. He asked her to give him a specimen of her handwriting. She evaded compliance at the moment, but the next morning, when he left the house, he found this note hid in his hat:

Mi dire everte

i louve you bot i louve not the riting

i can djiographie à ritmatique franche ingliche and a litle too couque bot not the riting seau wel

i dounot thingue it is goude for a wouman too nau too muche howe too rite

i am your afectuous frend

midj

When he had got this insight into her system of phonetics, he went out and bought a lot of school-books, and he began his task of instruction with many forebodings. But she soon relieved his fears. She saw that he desired it, and she studied hard. She learned only too rapidly; but she retained a fair proportion of what she learned. Of

course, he had to make some allowance for her habits of independent thought. To the end she retained a profound contempt for the unpractical character of the man who wrote the spelling-book.

"*Acme, apostroph', asth-ma,*" she said, running her finger down the column, "what shall he want of such words like those? I never shall say them. *Apple, acorn, ashes*—there is the sense. If you go take a walk in the country, you see acorns, you see apples. But you never shall say: 'See the beautiful apostroph' '—'look at the fine asth-ma.' It is a stupidness, to write such words that nobody will say."

The spelling-book was a humiliation for the Midge, and in self-defense she sought to vindicate her claim to intellectual maturity by demanding some French books to read. The Doctor went to the little "Librairie" with the blue sign, in South Fifth avenue, and bought a couple of volumes of the Bibliothèque Rose—the "Mémoires d'un Ane" and "l'Auberge de l'Ange Gardien." She contemptuously rejected both as childish and wholly beneath her. She wanted novels. So late one afternoon he made a solitary excursion to Brentano's.

The winter was nearly over. It was a soft, moist, slushy day—toward the end of February. The city was soaked in soiled snow, rapidly melting into soiled water. The shop doors were open, and through them came the rumble of stage-ridden Broadway, pierced by the high, shrill, humming ring of the car-wheels on the rails. A thin stream

of handsomely dressed women trickled in, swerved from counter to counter, and trickled out. Here and there, browsing on the fields of outspread books and pamphlets, were odd-looking men; men who would have been noticed in a crowd, each for some eccentricity or individuality of dress or personal appearance; men whom one would have called "professional," without exactly knowing why. In the "music department," a piano was pealing forth the latest waltz, and a dozen pretty bonneted heads nodded in time with its measure. The well-dressed clerks moved leisurely about, chatting in a friendly way with old customers. It did not look like a shop. The whole thing suggested an afternoon reception; and the clerks carried out the idea. They looked like a reception committee. The Doctor felt somewhat as though he were intruding upon a semi-private social affair. He hardly knew which way to turn, or how to go about his business of book-buying.

There was a pretty young woman at the desk. She had a sweet and kindly face, and the Doctor addressed himself to her. She pointed with her pen to the far-off counter where the French books were sold, and when he reached it, a courteous young Frenchman laid before him a half dozen of the latest importations. The covers were enough for the Doctor.

"Here!" he expostulated, "this won't do. I want something for a young lady—*pour une jeune fille*—see? This isn't the sort of thing at all."

But the courteous young Frenchman had been

carried off by a group of rather too well-dressed men, with handsome, over-fed faces, who seemed to be in search of just that "sort of thing," in a more exalted degree.

"Try this!" said a voice over his head. The Doctor looked up bewildered, and saw on the top of a small step-ladder, set against the bookshelves on the wall, a broad-shouldered young man in a rough tweed suit, with a cloth traveling cap on the side of his head. He had a handsome, happy, boyish face, with curling fair hair and blue eyes, strikingly dark for his complexion. On his upper lip was what might some day be a moustache, and under it he showed, as he smiled, white, even teeth. He looked down at the Doctor and the blue eyes laughed with amiable mischief. For a moment he stood holding out a book, and then he poised himself on one toe and skipped down from his perch much as a cat comes down a wall, landing almost as lightly.

"This is the sort of thing you want, I guess," he said: "there isn't a blush in it—perfectly safe." He handed the Doctor a copy of Sardou's "Perle Noire," and he smiled again as his eye ran over the volumes that had been proffered by the courteous Frenchman.

"Pretty hard lot he gave you, didn't he? But then French novels mostly *are* a pretty hard lot, Captain."

"Why do you call me Captain?" the Doctor asked, sternly. He felt a certain irritation. He would not have cared to own to himself that any

part of it was attributable to the stranger's display of athletic, exuberant youth. Yet one has to be a little older than the Doctor was to look quite kindly upon a boy in his first years of spring and snap.

"Well—you *are* a captain, aren't you?" laughed the young man: "or you have been, anyway."

"Not since you were in baby-clothes," returned the Doctor, grimly. The youth flushed under the rebuke, and frankly apologized.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said; "I had no right to be so fresh with a man of your—to talk like that, I mean. But I was sure you were a military man, or had been—I knew it by the way you carried yourself. I'm in the navy—that is, I'm just out of the school-ship"—he flushed again—"and I want to get transferred to the army, if I can—so you see I've got my head a little turned on the military question."

He smiled, and the Doctor smiled in return.

"That's all right," he said, "only I'm not accustomed to using a title. I was only a volunteer captain, anyway, and colonels and majors are so cheap, nowadays, that a captain is nowhere."

"They were *somewhere,* though, when you were a captain," suggested the boy, with an admiring look in his eyes: "I wish I'd had a chance at the business then—only I was in baby-clothes;" and again he colored and laughed.

"No, you don't," demurred the Doctor; "you wouldn't have liked it. It was too—mussy. Did you tell me this book was all correct and proper?"

"Straight as a string, sir. How old—I beg

your pardon—but how old, about, is the young lady? I might find you something else."

"Let me see," mused the Doctor, aloud, "let me see. She was born twelve or thirteen years ago. That'll make her—say about eighteen or twenty, now, as far as I can calculate."

The young man stared in frank amazement.

"You see," the Doctor went on, "she's a rather peculiar young woman. You can't tie her down to years, the way you would any one else. If you want to put it in plain, solid figures, she's only twelve or so. But sometimes I think she's a little older than I am myself. I'm not sure that I can get literature aged enough for her. At any rate, she wants regular grown-up French novels, and she's got to have them—if they can be got full-blown *and* respectable."

He checked himself with a frown. What was he doing, running on thus like a garrulous proud parent, in the presence of a perfect stranger! It was small consolation to reflect that he had been talking to himself, rather than to the stranger.

But the young man set things right with his cheery, friendly laugh, and in five minutes the two were ransacking the shop for virtuous French fiction.

When their search was ended, the afternoon reception was well-nigh over. In the streets the gas-lamps blazed brightly through the heavy dusk, flickering in a chill, raw wind that had suddenly come up from the East river. The Doctor buttoned his coat, but the young man seemed quite

comfortable in his tweed suit, as they strode down University Place together.

He gave the Doctor his card—"Paul Hathaway, U. S. N."—and the Doctor, who had no card, imparted his name.

It was Mr. Paul Hathaway's first card-plate, beyond a doubt. His giving the card was unnecessary, for one thing, and, for another, he took it out of a very new and very tightly packed card-case. And in his giving of it there was a certain touch of conscious importance that betrayed the novelty of the act. The Doctor felt sure that he had the first card out of the hundred that Brentano had delivered that afternoon.

Mr. Paul Hathaway did all the talking. He spoke of himself, of the school-ship, of the short "leave," to come to an end the next week, of how he had employed it in making sketching-tours around New York—he was a bad amateur artist, he explained.

They parted at Eighth Street, Paul Hathaway going off to his East Side lodging; and the Doctor, as he looked at the light sailor-like swaying of the broad shoulders vanishing in the wintry darkness, felt something of his first unreasonable feeling of irritation coming back to him. Why should the spring go out of a man's walk in the slipping away of a few miserable, unnoticed years?

The books that the Doctor brought the Midge that night were a mixed lot. There was "la Perle Noire," "la Petite Fadette," "le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre," "Paul et Virginie,"

Feuillet's "Sybille," "un Philosophe sous les Toits" and "Elizabeth, ou les Exilés de Sibérie" —he had read, in his boyhood, "Élisabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia," and he was pleased to think, as he did, that it had been translated into French.

The Midge received these offerings with varying favor. Her criticism on "Élisabeth" was decided. She called it "rococo."

Some months later, the Doctor happened to take up "Sybille," and, after glancing at a page or two, he read it through. When he had read it through, he put it in the fire. From that time on he was the implacable foe of French fiction in the household.

IX

THE winter slipped away and spring was upon the land. The Doctor found trouble in making himself believe that it was six months since his fortress had been invaded by the conquering queen whose sweetly imperious rule he was glad to own. He had looked upon the time as a period of preparation, of making ready to settle down under the new order of things. It was only the green of the grass and the blossoms on the trees that brought to him a realizing sense of the fact that the new order had been established long before, and that as to settling down, there was no such thing as absolute settling down while this growing, changing, ever-developing young life formed a part of his own. He could never come to an understanding with her, as he had come to an understanding with himself. However well he might grow to know her, her own highly original individuality must take its own course of evolution, and there were surprises for him all along the course.

Being brought up with a round turn by the change of the seasons, he took account of stock, after a fashion. He found himself best able to realize the changes in the Midge and the changes in his own surroundings by considering the aston-

ishing dimness that shrouded the past. It was hard for him to remember that things had ever been otherwise than they were now. The meagre loneliness of his life seemed something of ten or twenty years back. There was nothing in the Midge to-day to suggest the pathetic figure of the previous December. She was rather plump now, was the Midge; certainly pretty; well-dressed, with a contented, comfortable air about her that might have made her uninteresting if it had not been for her inborn coquetry. She had just enough whimsical airiness to carry off her self-complacency, which was great for one of her size.

She had changed in other ways, too. A distinct Frenchiness of idiom was never to be wholly eradicated from her conversation; but she was no longer positively incorrect in speech, except under stress of excitement. When once her pride had been awakened, she had put all her energy into the task of self-improvement; and she modeled her language so closely on that of the Doctor that he was obliged to reform his own vocabulary and give heed to many neglected subtleties of English grammar.

In fact, she made the Doctor her model to an extent that alarmed him. Except in matters of dress and gastronomy, she adopted him and all his codes, whole and complete. She had evidently become aware of the existence of standards, moral and social, superior to those of her infant years. She had discovered that to this new world into which she had come, the life her parents had

led was something positively objectionable. The feminine mind makes naturally for the respectable; and the Midge accepted the new standards and secretly felt ashamed of the old. When she spoke of her parents now, it was never to recount their vagabond adventures; she made pitiful little attempts to dress them up in her memory as rather nice and important people, emphasizing everything that was dignified and well-bred about them, and tenderly covering up all that was mean and poor.

The Doctor was glad of this. The rehabilitation of the Talbot family amused him, and touched his sense of the pathetic. He was glad, further, to note her quick acceptance of his cherished principles of conduct. He had a military character, in some things. He was scrupulously truthful, punctiliously faithful in the discharge of duty, exact, prompt, temperate, and just, as far as in him lay. Or at least he tried to be all these, and he made a fairly good job of it for a common mortal. And the child imitated him at a distance, and with a feminine difference.

But this very imitation gave him a new cause for uneasiness. Dr. Peters was reasonably well satisfied with his moral code. It had cost him enough to construct it, in bitter struggle with temptation and perplexity. He had tried it; he had lived by it; and he knew that, subject to frequent revision, and followed in due humility, it was a good, practicable, working code. But back of the code was the making of all codes, and the

standard by which all codes must be judged. And while in that regard he was at ease, how was it with his charge? He had his religion. It was not a creed, nor a system, nor a formula of any sort. It was something compounded of hope and fancy and speculation, that satisfied his spiritual cravings. It was the private adjustment that every thinking man makes with his own immortalities. But he knew that it was practically incommunicable. He could not write it out, as he might have written out his views on conduct, and hand the schedule to his pupil to be learned over night. It was the growth of individual experience and individual thought. It belonged to him. and to him alone.

Now, was he not in honor bound to provide a religion for the Midge? He could not expect her to construct one for herself. Women, as far as he knew, had their religions supplied to them ready made, and were supposed to take them without questioning. His mother had accepted the Thirty-nine Articles. If she had discovered on her death-bed that there was a fortieth that should have been accepted with the others, in the first instance, and had been left out by mistake, she would have accepted it without asking what it was.

He found himself facing the religions of the world, and called upon to select one to fit a child —one that she would not grow out of; one that would last her through a life that might be long or short, calm or troubled, happy or miserable. He was only a plain man, who had been a medical

student, a civil engineer, a volunteer soldier, a would-be inventor, and an amateur doctor. He felt humbly ignorant and bewildered. He wished that he knew more—or less.

What complicated the matter was the consideration that, even if his conscience would allow it, he could not pick out a creed at random and present it to his charge. He had never faced the great question which men in general prefer to ignore: Do women reason? He did not face it now. But he knew that the Midge had some appalling logical processes among her intellectual functions. And he reflected, with a chilled dismay, that her final test of anything which he asked her to believe would be to ask him if he believed it himself.

It was an awkward situation for the Doctor. When the Midge first came to him, the necessity of improving her physical health had been of the first importance. She was nervous and feeble, and all his efforts had been to the one end of making her sound and strong. Sunday had been their chosen day for excursions and open-air exercise. In the winter, they had made little trips to Central Park, or had taken sleigh-rides, when there was any snow. And now that the spring had come, and was fast changing to summer, they had taken their Sundays to invade Westchester, Staten Island, and the suburbs of Brooklyn and Jersey City.

When he told her that these outings, the crowning joy of her week, must be abandoned, and that

she must go to church, she acquiesced; but her disappointment was unconcealable.

He took her to the chapel where the Reverend Mr. Pratt preached. Mr. Pratt was surprised to see them there. He had always supposed that Dr. Peters attended divine service somewhere up town.

They went three times to Mr. Pratt's chapel. The second and third Sundays, Dr. Peters noticed that the Midge's lips were moving silently through all the time of service and sermon. As soon as they were out of church she eagerly addressed him:

"Do we need to go any more? I know it now."

"Know what?" demanded the Doctor.

"All those things they say. It is the same every Sunday. I have learned them all by heart —I will say them to you, and you can see."

"But they aren't the same thing every time, Midge. The lessons are different, and so is the collect."

"Well, we can read those at home. I will learn those, too, if you want."

"But the sermon's different. Mr. Pratt has a new sermon every Sunday."

"Oh, Mis-ter Pratt!" she returned, with innocent scorn; "do you care what *he* says, Ev-ert? He is no priest—Élise has told me so."

Further investigation convinced the Doctor that the Midge would never receive the ministrations of the Reverend Mr. Pratt in a proper spirit. She had disliked him at their first meeting, and she

had since learned the opinion held of him in the quarter, where he was looked upon as an elegant amateur of religion, not to be mentioned in the same breath with faithful, conscientious Father Dubé, or even with energetic, soul-amassing Brother Strong, of the Bethel.

They went no more to the chapel, and the outings began again; but on rainy Sundays the Doctor slipped out by himself about eleven o'clock, each day visiting a new church, and listening attentively to the prayers and the preaching.

He heard, in the course of that summer and the ensuing fall, a great deal of very interesting discourse; but he did not come across any variety of religious instruction that seemed to him to fit the Midge's case.

In the autumn he came to the conclusion that he was beginning his search at the wrong end. The Midge was, after all, a child, and she needed the education of a child. He sent her to the Sunday-school of the chapel.

The Sunday-school scheme was a complete failure; but it brought about a better understanding. After the second Sunday of attendance, the Midge revolted, and vigorously.

"It is a nonsense, Ev-ert," she said, excitedly; "*vois-tu,* they have given me this little yellow thing to learn"—and she held up a printed text—"and I can learn ten hundred of those in a day. And they have told me such histories!—of an old man who is mocked of the little boys, and, *figure-toi,* there are bears come out of a forest and eat

them up! Is it that I am a child, to be told such stories like that?"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the Doctor, "why, that was Elijah—or Elisha—I forgot which. Why, he was a prophet."

"I do not know what was his business; but he had no hair. And I am not a little boy who is rude to old gentlemen. Why do they tell me such stories?"

"My dear," said the Doctor, "you needn't go to the Sunday-school any more. I'm going to take this business in hand myself. It seems to be laid out for me to do work out of my line, and I'm going to stumble right on."

He got down from his bookshelf his mother's Bible, which stood between "Gummere's Surveying" and "Peveril of the Peak," and that day he began a course of readings from the Scripture, accompanied with comment and criticism of a varied and often original nature, remembered tradition struggling uncertainly with independent thought.

The Midge was interested at last. She was always willing to sit on the ground, with her head on his knee, and to listen wisely to his reading and to his remarks.

Her ingrained skepticism led her to ask for his personal confirmation of the story of Eve and the serpent.

"My dear," he answered, gravely, "we can't tell people to believe things, or not to believe. Everybody has to act for himself or herself. My

mother died believing every word of this, from cover to cover. I'm in a sort of a mixed condition, myself. When you get older—the subject is a little extensive for you, just at present—you can form your own conclusions, and I'll try my best to help you. Just now, all that you and I have got to do is to get all the good we can out of it. As to the serpent—well, some people have said that this is a sort of a fable, as it were; and they say the moral is that a young woman may sometimes know too much, or think she does."

The Midge was silent.

. . . . . .

It was a soft September day, and the foliage in the parks was just beginning to thin out and look pale in the warm sunlight, when Dr. Peters, crossing Washington Square, found Father Dubé sitting on a bench, with a smile on his round face as he watched a small flock of brown birds hopping and tumbling about a crust of bread.

"Hello, Dubé!" he hailed his friend, "I didn't know you ever loafed."

"But I do," said the priest, his smile growing kinder, though it was not a cheerful smile, "I am capable not only of loafing, but of idle thoughts. I have been wishing that that I were a sparrow."

"I don't wish you were a sparrow," rejoined the Doctor, sitting down on the bench beside him, "for I want to ask your advice, and I'm not asking advice of sparrows."

"I am not a sparrow," said Father Dubé, his

smile fading out; "I am a priest, and I will give advice to any one who wants it. That is what I am here for. Sometimes I think that it is all I am good for."

"I hope you are good for my case," the Doctor began; and he went on to tell the story of his perplexity and his audacious attempt to solve the problem for himself.

"I don't know just what I want you to say," he concluded, "and I don't suppose there's anything you *can* say, but one thing. If you've got any light on the subject, I wish you'd shed it for the benefit of a humble heretic. You and I don't talk quite the same language; but I guess you can sort of make signs that I can understand."

Father Dubé clasped one knee with his locked hands, and looked hard at the sparrows. There was a shade of depression on his face, and he spoke slowly and in a tone of sad gentleness.

"I suppose you think you know what I will say. Eh? That is it? 'Make her a Catholic.' Well, no, I do not say it."

He paused for a moment.

"You cannot make her a good Catholic, while she is under your influence; while she believes in you. You can not make her a member of the Church of England. You know it. It is impossible. You can make her go to the altar, and say her prayers—but you know that that is not religion, if her heart is not there. For an intelligent person, that is worse than no religion at all. The worst enemy of the Church is he

who kisses the cross and doubts in his heart."

The priest's tone was stern, almost severe; but it changed to genial tenderness as he turned to the Doctor and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"It is God who makes Catholics—it is not Dr. Peters or Father Dubé. Leave it to Him. Perhaps you do not believe in Him? I do not know. I have known you for many years; but I do not know your thoughts. I know your heart, however; and what you have told me—that is all right. Go on—teach her what you know—make her a good woman. That is all you can do. Do not try to do more. You will not do it well."

He rose, and clasping his hands behind him spoke with repressed excitement.

"My friend, it is not every one who shall say to himself: 'I shall serve.' Look at me. I am sixty years old, and I am a mistake." He looked Dr. Peters straight in the eye. "When I was young, I thought I had a vocation for the priesthood. I was full of enthusiasm. I had read of the martyrs, of the soldiers of the Church. I said: I too, will serve her. Well—it is now forty years, and I know that I had no vocation. I had only ambition. I am of a nature that is not fit for a priest. I love my ease, I indulge myself. I am tired. I could not be tired if I had been called to my work. Look you, Peters—me, a priest of God—it is distasteful to me to go among these poor and ignorant—my heart is not in my work."

"You manage to control your distaste pretty

well," said the Doctor, warmly. "Don't talk in that way about yourself. I know what you do for those people."

"I do my work; but another would do it better. They like me, yes; because I am easy with them. They know I have not the heart to be stern. They can put me off with any story. Anything is good enough for old Dubé. It is not men like me who represent the dignity and authority of the Church. There is Father Quinlan"—he pointed across the square—"they respect *him.*"

Quinlan was the priest of a neighboring parish.

"Quinlan's a brute, begging his pardon," said the Doctor.

"But they fear him, they respect him," repeated the old man, stubbornly. He was silent for a moment, and then he broke forth again, with uncontrollable vehemence.

"I am a soldier of the Church—yes. But what am I for a soldier? I am a sentinel—put out far in the forest. What do I see of Her victories, of Her grandeur, of Her glory? What have I done for Her?"

His kind old face was drawn with lines of pain. He looked upward, as if for some answer from the skies. After a moment, he came to himself with a heavy sigh.

"That is all wrong, of course," he said "You wonder that I should speak so to you—to you who are not of the Church. Well, you can understand me better than some who are of the Church. I have done wrong, however. And you came to ask

me for advice. Well, I have given it. Good-bye, my friend."

He walked solemnly away, his head bent, his hands clasped behind him; the autumn sunlight falling on him as he walked down the avenue of trees.

When the Doctor reached home, the Midge was at the sitting-room window.

"I saw you and Father Dubé in the square," she observed: "you were talking a great deal. What was it about?"

"Oh, of all sorts of things, Midge," he replied: "vocation, and religion and human error, and various things."

The Midge meditated briefly.

"Ev-ert," she said, "if you want me to, I will be a Catholic. But it is a nonsense."

"I don't think it's necessary, my dear."

"Well, what do you want that I shall be, then?"

The Doctor crossed the room, and, taking her face between his hands, lifted it up, so that he could look into her eyes. Then he asked:

"Midge, do you love me?"

"You know I do!" she answered, opening her eyes.

"Right clean through, honest and true?"

"Why, Ev-ert—you *know* Yes."

"And you're going to be a good girl?"

"Yes," she assented, in opened-eyed wonder.

The Doctor looked at her long and earnestly.

"Well," he said at last, "I guess you are."

X

THE fall went, and winter came, and December, and it was a year since the Midge had entered the apartments of Dr. Peters. Then another year went by, and another, and a fourth Christmas came. Late on Christmas eve he slipped a gold watch and a huge package of candy into her slim, blue stocking, that swung from the sitting-room mantel. He scowled as he tried to think that he and the Midge were three years older.

"Ain't either," he soliloquized; "not so far as I'm concerned. I'm three years younger, if I'm anything."

But he glanced ruefully at the long stocking.

"*She* grows," he thought.

Their life was so regular and uneventful that they marked the movement of time only by the record of the calendar—the annual holidays and the changes of the seasons. Yet the Midge was undoubtedly growing. She now wrote and spelled French and English so well that she could never have passed for a girl educated in a fashionable school. She had begun to make obscure references to a serious and impending future of "long dresses." Her hair no longer hung down her neck. It was braided into two neat tails, which

were spliced together with effective ribbons, and these tails displayed a tendency to crawl up into a coil on the back of her head. Once or twice, even, the coil had given place to a loose knot. But the appearances of the knot were only tentative, so far.

Her education was getting to that dangerous point of ambitious beginning when young ladies' educations are generally "finished." She was studying painting and music. It was good old Parker Prout who taught her the art of Nassau Street. Somebody once said of Parker Prout that he succeeded as a teacher because he also served his pupils as an Awful Example. Prout came twice a week, and, under his tuition, the Midge learned to paint water-colors, touching in their simplicity of composition and their free use of the primary colors. Her skies were blue, her trees were green and her sun was yellow when it was not red; and you could always tell just where one thing left off and another began, in her pictures. She was very well satisfied with them, and so was the Doctor. He said they indicated the possession of a cheerful disposition.

Other twice a week came Professor Max Mannheim, who tortured himself into paroxysms of harmless rage in trying to teach her to play the piano.

"Du lieber Gott in Himmel!" he would shriek: "Iss dot a chordt off A? W'at shall you do if you shall not *sink?* I do not esk zet you hef fing-erss —I do not esk zet you hef arms—I do not esk zet

you hef hentss—bot play mit ze kray metter off your prain—only once! La, la, la!"—with a staccato hammering of three of the piano keys, as though he had the obstinate gray matter of the Midge's brain under his wiry fingers. The Midge herself merely smiled on him in amiable calm, either recognizing in all this a form of vehement impatience, or accepting it as something inseparable from the inculcation of the art of music. After the hour of turmoil was over, they were good friends, and the Professor frequently took her to afternoon concerts, where Dr. Peters could not have been dragged with ox-chains. She liked the concerts fairly well, especially when they ran to what the Professor called the "tresh" of Strauss and Waldteufel and Abt.

In these three years the Midge had become a sturdy young thing, not tall—that she never would be—but plump and mature of figure for a girl in her sixteenth year. Nor did her water-colors belie her disposition, for she was cheerful and contented, and her youthful vivacity was apparently undimmed by any consciousness that she had no friends or associates under forty years of age.

It was in the fourth spring of her stay that the Doctor noticed a puzzling change in her. She began to moult, as he put it. Her health was excellent; but there was a marked diminution in her usually large fund of energy and enthusiasm. She seemed to lose her interest in their long walks, and in their Sunday rambles. She preferred to sit at home and read, or at least she said she did.

After a while he noticed that when she had a book in her hand she was not always reading.

The Doctor's affectionate diagnosis of the case was wholly unsatisfactory. He felt that she had something on her mind; but delicate questioning and gentle overtures to confidential communion brought him no nearer to finding out what the something was. As time went on, she became fickle of mood. Sometimes she fairly purred in kitten-like felicity. And the next day she would "moult" again. "I know the world is hollow," thought the Doctor, "but she can't have found it out yet. That comes later."

One day he found her crying, and he demanded an explanation. She gave him none, but slipped silently out of his grasp and went into her own room. It was the first time that she had ever been anything but gentle and submissive to him. He refrained from following her; but he made up his mind that radical remedial measures were in order; and in a manner it eased his mind to reflect that the extravagance of this manifestation made it almost certain that there was a physical cause for her morbid state of mind. "Malaria, I believe," he pondered: "I suppose that means moving up town. Something's got to be done, and right now. She'd never act in that way if she wasn't sick. Malaria, for certain. I presume I'd have had it, living in this region, if I ever had anything—except an appetite."

But he had a greater shock before him than the discovery of malaria. An hour later the Midge

came gravely and sadly from her room and stood in front of him, lifting a face painfully set and old for a child of sixteen.

"I am sorry I went away from you like that," she said, gently. "I did not mean to be—not nice. But I was feeling very badly. I was making up my mind."

"Making up your mind?" he repeated, smiling.

"Yes. I want to go away."

"To go away? Where?"

She stood with her hands hanging down by her sides, and her figure drooped as though she were tired.

"I do not know. That we must find out. Some place—some asylum, or some place where I can do some work."

"Midge!" the Doctor cried, "what do you mean?"

She threw up her hands with a nervous gesture and drew a quick breath of pain.

"No, I know what you will say! But I can not stay here more. I know it—I did not know it once; but I know it now—it is all wrong. I have no right to be here. I am no relation to you—I am nobody at all. You have just found me, and I have made you take care of me because you are too good to send me away. I have been selfish, and I have taken it all; but I knew not better when I came here. I was ignorant. Now I know, and I will be selfish no longer. I will go away—no! no!—you shall not tell me to stay. It is not right that I stay. You must let me go!"

The Doctor had a fleeting vision of the room as

it had looked on the night when the Midge first entered it, and of the pitiful little form in the long black waterproof. It gave him a shock to connect that picture with the girl who stood now on nearly the same spot. He reached out and put his hands on her shoulders, though at first she shrank a little from his grasp.

"Midge," he said, holding her firmly and speaking with slow decision, "you can go away if you want to. If you are tired of living here——"

"Ah! no."

"If you feel that you have got to go, I won't hinder you. You can do as you please."

Her lips closed tightly, and her face grew whiter.

"But, look here! I want you to understand one thing. You may go—but if you go, I go too. Do you understand that? Wherever you go, I'm going too—see?"

A queer little cry came from her. It was almost joyous, yet it seemed to have a sob behind it.

"My dear child," he went on, holding her tighter as she shrunk away, "let's settle this thing once for all. You don't appear to know that you are talking right down wickedly. What's the use of telling me that you don't belong to me? You do! What could I do without you? I couldn't get along—you ought to know that. You aren't under any obligations to me—I'm under obligations to you. That's the way it stands. Now, just look at the matter reasonably. I'm an old man——"

"You are not an old man!" she broke in; "I will

not have you call yourself an old man. You are forty-four years and seven months old. That is not old! That is nothing."

"It's something, my dear," he said, staring into vacancy over her head. "I'm too old to make new friends. Now, you're my best friend. You aren't any relation of mine—that's true. But you're a good deal more to me than any relation I ever had, and I'm going to hang on to you and keep you and *own* you, do you grasp that fact? So don't you ever talk again about leaving me, unless you want to make me talk to you pretty seriously. You hear that?"

She heard it in silence. He took her on his lap and set to work to reason it out. He told her that he had no kindred who had claims upon him, that he was free to do as he liked with his own, that his income, though it was not extravagantly large, was more than he could ever spend upon himself—more than sufficient for both of them. She listened, and yielded gently, almost wearily. There was a trace of something like humiliation in her manner, however, as she sat with bowed head and heard him patiently. But in the end she gave the promise he required of her, never to mention the subject again, and to put the thought out of her mind, as far as possible.

When this was done, and the Doctor's mind was relieved, he wanted to go on with a few further comments and reflections, gathering up the loose end of their talk; but she showed a distinct desire to close the conversation, and left her place upon

his knee to prepare the table for dinner, for the afternoon was passing into evening.

Afterwards she went to her room. She always made some pleasing and significant change in her attire for the evening meal. The Doctor was striding up and down the room, after his fashion, when she suddenly emerged. Her listless, fatigued manner had gone; she was tremulous, tearful and excited, and she threw herself upon him, binding him in her arms with a violent eagerness.

"I have been wrong," she cried; "yes, I have been wrong to you. I have been ungrateful, and I have pained you. I did not mean it. I do not want to go away from you. I will never go away from you unless you want me to. You have not understood me. I have been wrong; but you have not understood me. I only mean to do what you would have me. Yes, I do belong to you, Evert, I will do whatever you say, now and always. If you ever say to me to go, I will go; and if you say to me stay, I will stay. I want you to hear me, Evert. Always, always, always! I will do just what you say. Always I will do just what you want. You can tell me nothing that I will not do—and I will be glad, if you say it. Do you know that, Evert?"

She trembled convulsively as she clung to him. He saw that she was agitated beyond the limit of her childish strength, and he soothed her with all possible gentleness, until the wild excitement gave place to unnerved exhaustion, and she let herself be petted and caressed like a baby.

He scarcely understood it all; but he made certain that she needed fatherly care and tonic medicines, and for weeks thereafter she had both, administered to the best of his ability. It was some time before the treatment showed good effects; but by midsummer he saw with pride that she had been brought back to sanity, and he discontinued the use of the tonic medicines; though he relaxed nothing in his fatherly care.

They went out of town a good deal during the summer, making little trips to the Catskills and to the Jersey coast, spending a few days at a time in these airings. He did not feel that he could afford to give more, for he had got to work upon the sewing machine improvement; and, besides, he was always needed in the quarter—although he was not called upon so often as he had been in earlier days. There seemed to be a general understanding among the poor people that he was now a man of family, and that his time was no longer wholly at their service. Yet he went among them often, and sometimes, now, the Midge went with him, and she showed a creditable readiness and intelligence as a nurse.

. . . . . .

They had a way of dining out, once in a while, to break the monotony of a long succession of household repasts. One fine day in November, Élise wanted to go to Hoboken, to the christening of her cousin's ninth child, and they were glad to let her off, and to avail themselves of the excuse

to go forth and take their dinner in a restaurant.

It was a true day of Indian summer—summer surely enough, although its radiance rested on bare trees and grass out of which the life had faded; and though the cool blue of the higher sky, and the soft haze on the horizon, seen down the long vista of the city street, gave no suggestion of summer's sensuous languors.

The day before, the Midge had celebrated her sixteenth birthday, and they agreed to regard this dinner as an extension and continuation of the celebration.

It was a modest feast—only a plain *table-d'hôte* dinner, eaten in the heart of the quarter, at a cost of half-a-dollar apiece. They had tried more elaborate dinners, at the great hotels up-town; but they preferred the simpler joys of Charlemagne's restaurant. They both possessed that element of Bohemianism which belongs to all good fellows—the Midge was a good fellow, as well as the Doctor.

Charlemagne's is a thing of the past; but he was a jolly king of cheap eating-house keepers while he lasted. He gave a grand and wholesome dinner for fifty cents. The first items were the *pot-au-feu* and *bouilli*. If the *pot-au-feu* was thin, the *bouilli* was so much the richer. And if the *bouilli* was something woodeny, why, you had had all the better *pot-au-feu* before it. Then came an *entrée*—calves' brains, perhaps, or the like; a *rôti*, a vegetable or two coming with it; a good salad, chicory or lettuce or plaintain, a dessert of

timely fruits, a choice of excellent cheese, and a cup of honest black coffee. And with all this you got bread *ad libitum* and a half bottle of drinkable wine, that had never paid duty, for it came from California, though it called itself Bordeaux. And if you were inclined to extravagant luxury, you might respond to the invitation of the small placards on the wall, and "Ask for the Little Pot." And, having asked for the little pot, you got a tiny china cup, shaped like a pipkin, which held two or three brandied cherries, steeping in their luscious juice. It cost you ten cents more, and it gave a dollar's worth of flavor to your *demi-tasse* of coffee

It was not aristocratic, M. Charlemagne's little place in Houston Street; the table-cloths were coarser than the wrappings of Egyptian mummies; there was little to show that the spoons and forks had ever been plated; there was no ceremony among the diners, and shirt-sleeves were always *en règle.* And the great bowl of soup was passed around that every guest might help himself, much as it might have been done in the time of the proprietor's namesake. But everything was clean, and all things were decent and well-ordered within that respectable resort. Poor French clerks and saving French tradesmen mostly frequented it. Now and then there was a table-full of newspaper men, actors, artists and unclassified Bohemians, who atoned for their uncontrollable noisiness by amusing all the graver patrons of the house with their ready mirth and

ephemeral wit, always generously loud enough to be at the service of the whole room.

Madame Charlemagne, holding the *pot-au-feu* breast-high, hailed the Doctor and the Midge as they entered, and called upon M. Charlemagne to find seats for them.

M. Charlemagne, rotund and jovial, with the air of a comic cook in an opéra bouffe, showed them to a little table between the fireplace and the window.

There was one other person already at the table—a young man. Looking up after his soup, it struck the Doctor that he had seen the young man before, somewhere. He had only a vague sense of knowing the broad shoulders, the bright young face and the moustache that was still as small as anything can be that has a right to be called a moustache. The young man, with the color of confusion in his cheeks, directed toward the Doctor a smile of recognition, and toward the Doctor's companion a look of awkward apology. Dr. Peters felt sure he had seen him before. He would have contented himself with a nod in acknowledgment; but the ingenuous embarrassment in the young face appealed to his sympathy.

"I think I've met you before——" he began, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes, in—that is, I think so—don't you remember? One afternoon, two or three years ago—you were buying French books—for a young lady." He added this last clause with impulsive eagerness, and then blushed furiously.

"Oh, yes," said the Doctor. "I remember now. In the navy, eh? But your name has slipped me."

"Hathaway," returned the young man, promptly; "Paul Hathaway. That was just before I sailed for South America. We had quite a talk together, don't you recollect."

"Why, yes," said the Doctor, beginning to recall some of the results of that talk, in the way of purchase of French literature.

"I hope," the young man boldly pushed on, "I hope you liked the books you bought. Were they what you wanted?"

He glanced furtively at the Midge, who was eating her *bouilli* very daintily, and utterly ignoring his presence.

"Well, no," the Doctor responded, slowly, a smile curling the corners of his mouth; "I can't just say they were, exactly—not all of them."

"Weren't they—weren't they satisfactory to the young lady?"

He was fiery red in the face with this; but the Doctor did not notice it, seemingly. His smile of amusement grew broader.

"I don't know about that," he said; "I didn't hear her say anything much about them—but maybe she can tell you better for herself. This is the young lady."

He indicated the Midge. It was rather comic to him to think that the child for whom he had bought novels three years before, was now so near to being indeed a young lady. He saw that he must introduce Mr. Hathaway to the Midge, and

he smiled again as he fitted her rarely used patronymic to his simple formula of introduction.

"Mr.—Mr.—Hathaway, isn't it?—this is Miss Talbot, who wanted the books."

It amused him to think of the Midge as Miss Talbot. But if he took the formality somewhat lightly, the Midge made up for it by the dignity with which she received the intimation of Mr. Hathaway's existence. She smiled condescendingly, as she ate her *bouilli,* and listened to the young man's remarks on French literature.

Mr. Hathaway was frankly talkative. From French literature he skipped to talking about himself, and he had much interesting information to impart concerning his three years' cruise in the tropics. He had been at Valparaiso a long time, and he described Valparaiso with enthusiastic admiration. Valparaiso led him to talk about Paris, and that brought the Midge out, and the Doctor was able to withdraw from the conversation and devote himself to his dinner, while the younger people chatted of Europe and European ways. To hear the Midge talk, you would have thought that she had been a fashionable tourist with many years' experience of the Continent.

Incidentally, it came out that Mr. Hathaway was at home on sick-leave. He had been hurt in the course of some gun-practice at Newport, early that summer. The Midge had thawed, by this time, and she gave his sufferings the tribute of a dainty little "Oh!"—which expression of sympathy he manfully disclaimed. He had not been

hurt much, he explained; it was really nothing at all—only a game leg for a few weeks—and he was all right now. Oh, yes, he was all right—only the day before yesterday he had taken a twenty mile walk, to get a little sketching, along the Bronx.

The Midge called the Doctor's attention to this fact. They, too, had recently been wandering along the tortuous course of the river Bronx. It was an interesting coincidence. And she also told the Doctor that Mr. Hathaway had been engaged in gun-practice. She drew his notice to this with a proud sense of safety, for she knew that he was wholly weaned from his old schemes of blood-thirsty invention.

Dr. Peters heard her remarks rather absent-mindedly. He had been thinking while the other two talked. He thought that Mr. Hathaway was a very kindly young man, to be willing to spend so much time on a child. And he saw that the Midge was enjoying the conversation.. She was positively vivacious—brighter than he had seen her in some time. She had never quite recovered her high spirits since her sickness in the spring. Now her eyes sparkled, and she ran on so fluently that he was afraid she would bore her new acquaintance. It struck him, for the first time, that she did not see enough of young people. Hathaway, of course, was too old for her; but if he was considerate enough to talk with her, and if it did her good—why, where would be the harm in asking him to come and see them, once in a while? It

would be a change for the Midge—perhaps for him, too.

He asked Mr. Hathaway to call. Mr. Hathaway said he would, and when they left the restaurant, he walked with them to their door, so that he might not forget their number.

Two days later, he called. He made himself very entertaining, and when he told of his long and lonely sketching-tramps, the doctor invited him to join their expedition for the next Sunday. He accepted the invitation with agreeable readiness.

After he had gone, the Doctor felt that his act had been somewhat impulsive.

"I ought to have asked you first, Midge, whether you wanted to have him go. I was rather thoughtless, I guess. How do you feel about it? I won't do it again unless you say so."

The Midge raised her eyebrows and let them fall in a doubtful frown.

"Just you and I—that is what I like best, Evert. But if you think he will be pleasant—it is for you to say. You like him?—you think he is nice?"

"Why, yes; he seems a straightforward, honest sort of fellow. Don't think so?"

"I do not know." She shrugged her shoulders as she looked in the glass and adjusted her hair. "It is too soon to say."

The next Sunday was fine, and they went to Fort Hamilton, the three of them. Down there, the sea breezes had kept the grass green, and had left a few leaves on the trees. They wandered along the bluff, and admired the English beauty of Clif-

ton spire, nestling against the Staten Island hills opposite. They went up to the Fort, and saw the place where the Doctor's gun had been tried; and the Doctor told the story of the failure, with humor chastened by retrospection. Mr. Hathaway informed them as to the rig of the craft at anchor in the Narrows and up the bay, and spoke of foreign ports which he had seen. They had a good early dinner, which they ate in a jovial frame of mind, at the queer old half-inn half-boarding-house under the bluff; and a little before seven o'clock they took the rattling, swaying dummy for Brooklyn, and were at home in gas-lit New York just as the church bells began to ring for evening service.

"Well, Midge," said the Doctor, later in the evening, "how was it? Shall I ask him again?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I do not want to say, Evert. You must do as you please. It is nothing to me. But you have not said anything about my hair."

"What do you want me to say about your hair? Your hair's all right—oh, I see! What has become of the pig-tails?"

"They are not the fashion now. Don't you think this way is more pretty?"

XI

IF it had been left to the Doctor to say whether or no Mr. Paul Hathaway should be encouraged to continue his visits, the chilly indifference displayed by the Midge might have settled the question in the negative. But it was not left to the Doctor. Mr. Hathaway took the matter into his own hands. He had received one invitation, and he needed no more. He simply came, and continued to come, and as he was thoroughly agreeable, and as they always enjoyed his visits, there seemed to be no reason why he should do otherwise.

The exigencies of social intercourse demand that we should know who our friends are, and whence they come. Mr. Hathaway supplied all the necessary data in his case. He was frank and open, and when he talked about himself, it was with the indifferent ease with which he might have discoursed on the peculiarities of the port of Rio Janeiro. He was the son of a Pennsylvania clergyman, who had been also a school teacher. His parents were dead, the uncle who had brought him up was dead; he had passed his boyhood on the school-ship, and he was now in the navy. That was all his story. As he put it, he was a regular out-and-out, thoroughgoing, plain, unvarnished

waif. Nobody owned him, and nobody seemed anxious to take possession of him. He had no prospects of promotion in the navy, and he was as tired of it as a man could be at twenty-three. He had wanted to exchange into the army, because there he would have more leisure, and more time for sketching. Sketching was about the best fun he knew. Of course, he couldn't really do anything at it; but, still, it was fun. Only he saw no prospect of getting into the army. Lieutenancies were not lying around loose. He supposed he would have to go back to the *Wequetequock,* when his sick leave expired. And perhaps it was all he was good for, after all. Certainly the Peters household would be tired of him by that time. Oh, it was very kind of them to say that they wouldn't; but they hadn't tried it yet. They would have two months more of him.

In the first of their acquaintance, when he had heard that the Midge painted in water-colors, he had promised to bring his sketches around to show her. On his first visit she exhibited her own works, and reminded him of his promise; but somehow or other, from day to day he forgot to produce the pictures. It was only on the friendly insistence of the Doctor that he finally brought a package of sketches for their inspection. And immediately afterward the Midge's portfolio disappeared from the sitting-room.

Mr. Hathaway's modesty had over-served him in this instance. He drew uncommonly well, and his work had that quality of confidence and spirit

which picture dealers and some art-critics call *chic*. The next afternoon that he looked in at the Peters establishment—he had got to "looking in" by this time—the Midge was painting, and much to his embarrassment, and against his will, he found himself gently but firmly placed in the position of a superior critic and adviser—a sort of amateur teacher, in fact.

This initial introduction of a visitor into the family accomplished itself without friction and with pleasant results. The Doctor saw that their previous "twofold solitude" had been a mistake. He began to ask people to come to see them. He knew but few who were desirable as familiar associates, and there were none of them very young or very entertaining; but he did his best with these few. He got Parker Prout and Professor Mannheim to drop in of an evening, and when they took kindly to the idea, as they did after a first trial, he was surprised to see how much more there was in them than came out in their professional hours, or even in their time of recreation at the Brasserie Pigault, where he had first met them. Father Dubé, too, was willing to give them an evening from time to time, and he taught the Midge to play dominoes. The Doctor seriously reproached himself that he had not thought to instruct her in that innocent and mildly exciting game. But then it seemed to him that he had neglected the Midge in various ways. There were possibilities in life with which he had done nothing to make her familiar. He had not noticed her growth, or the

fact that his own world was somewhat narrow for her.

This was borne in upon Dr. Peters when the Reverend Mr. Pratt loomed up as one of the possibilities of life. He was invited one night to play whist with Parker Prout, Professor Mannheim and the Doctor. The Midge abhorred whist, and so Paul Hathaway kept her company in a far corner while the game went on. Mr. Pratt played whist, not because he liked it, but because he considered it one of the approved and accepted forms of amusement which it was his duty, as a clergyman of the Church of England, to encourage. He passed a jovial evening, for him. He drank a glass of sherry and ginger-ale; although, as he observed, the use of strong liquor did not agree with him.

Presumably, however, he did not suffer from remorse or indigestion on the morrow, for he began to pay frequent calls, and showed an amiable interest in the welfare of Dr. Peters and Miss Talbot.

"Miss Talbot" she did not remain long to any of the little group. Her father's name had long been unfamiliar to her own ears, and she did not seem inclined to insist upon her right to it. The Doctor and Prout called her "Midge"; Mannheim hailed her as "Mitsh," which was as near as he could come to it; and the two younger men had to find more suitably respectful modes of address. Mr. Pratt selected "Miss Lodoiska," without sparing one syllable, and Hathaway called her

"Miss Lois." This was a bold and original device, and he had the name to himself.

From the time that he first heard her called "Miss Lodoiska," the Doctor became conscious of a new discomfort. He had to recognize not only the fact that she *was* "Miss" Lodoiska, but the fact that others recognized that fact.

The Reverend Theodore Beatty Pratt recognized it. Before he had been long a visitor in that top floor on Washington Square, he became aware, to some extent, of the deficiencies in her religious education. He never grasped the whole hideous truth, but he learned enough to make him deeply concerned for her. He tried to get her to teach a class in the Sunday-school, by way of making up for what she herself should have been taught, and, failing in this, he asked her to read a few books which he desired to select for her. She did not refuse, and he brought the books, and came from time to time to talk them over with her. He did nearly all the talking himself; but then his opinions were unimpeachably correct.

If it had begun and ended with the books, the Doctor would have been well pleased. But the books were only a small part of it. Mr. Pratt's communications stretched out into expansions of personality, and confidences. He told the Midge of his private hopes and ambitions. He told her of his early life in a small Ohio village, of the struggles of his youth, of the sacrifices which his mother had made to send him to college, of the

pride with which she looked upon his present position. And, worst of all, he told Miss Lodoiska of his first and only love-affair and its unfortunate ending.

The Doctor knew more or less of this, and he was displeased and disturbed. He thought that Pratt was very wrong to talk so to a girl of the Midge's age. And even if she was not quite a child—and he was willing to admit that she had got beyond the point where she could be called a child and nothing more—she was certainly not old enough for that sort of thing. Pratt was old enough, himself, to know better. And he was young enough to make his indiscretion possibly dangerous. And the Doctor was displeased with the Midge for listening to such talk. Why she wanted to listen to Pratt at all, he could not understand. But she certainly did listen.

The Doctor knew little of social diplomacy. He had tact and diplomacy in dealing with the poor and miserable; but he felt himself at a loss in a matter like this. He gave Mr. Pratt two or three hints so broad that no man free from an absolutely guilty conscience could have understood them; and he made some disparaging remarks about Pratt to the Midge. These she received in silence, which was the only way she ever expressed disapproval of anything he did. This annoyed and perplexed him more than he would have been willing to confess to himself. And so it came about that there grew up a misunderstanding—undefined,

unavowed; but a misunderstanding—between himself and her; and their life was not just what it had been before.

The Doctor was greatly relieved when he learned that Mr. Pratt was about to leave New York. There was to be a change in the management of the mission. Mr. Pratt's charge had been only temporary in its nature, though he had held it for some years; and he had not been successful in his labors. The trustees were dissatisfied, and he himself felt that he was out of place. So he had accepted a call to a church in Ohio, near his native place. He was very thankful for the call, and very glad of the prospect of having a church of his own. And he could see his mother, from time to time, by driving twenty-five miles. He never thought to inquire whether the dissatisfaction of the trustees of the mission had anything to do with the procurement of the call. He only knew that he was called to a field of labor for which he felt himself better suited.

He came one afternoon to bid the Midge goodbye. He brought her several books which he wanted her to read. He spoke of his prospects and of what he hoped to accomplish. He told her he wished he had been able to be of more service to her, as a spiritual guide, than he had been, and when he rose to go he stood for a moment or two limply shaking her hand.

"I suppose," he said, "it doesn't seem very attractive to you, the idea of living in a little country village, away out in Ohio?"

"No," she answered frankly, "it must be a bore. I hope you will like it better than I should. It must be a great bore."

"There is so much to be done," he said.

"Well, I hope you will do it. It is nice of you to go, you know. Yes," she added, reflectively, "I am sure it is nice of you to go."

He looked hard at her, and then turned away, and, saying "Good-bye," went down the stairs. He was a poor little fellow, poor of intellect, poor of soul; but he was man enough to read and respect the high unconsciousness of her maiden eyes.

. . . . . .

When the Doctor came home that evening—he had been out buying tools for his sewing-machine model-making—the Midge greeted him with a rapturous smile, such as she had not given him in weeks.

"Oh, Evert," she said, "Mr. Pratt has gone."

"Well?" returned the Doctor, rather unsympathetically.

"I'm so glad!"

"You're *glad?*"

"Why, of course."

"Well, I don't see precisely why 'of course.' I thought you had been pretty thick of late, you two."

"Oh, I had to be polite to him, you know. I did dislike him so."

"Your logic beats *me,* Midge," said the Doctor,

with an uneasy smile. "If you didn't like him, why didn't you show it?"

"Don't you understand?" she asked, looking at him in mild surprise. "I did not want to be unjust, any more than you would."

The Doctor pondered.

"Well, I suppose there is something in that."

"Of course—don't you see? And he would come to me and tell me all about his mother, and how she has had meat only once a week, so that he might go to college and be a clergyman. And I was very sorry for his mother, and it was very nice of her—but you have no idea, Evert, how he has bored me."

The Doctor's brows were wrinkled.

"I thought you were interested in his conversation."

"Interested! But it was a bore—oh, a *bore.*"

"You managed to conceal it pretty well," he observed, grimly.

She gave him a surprised look, and then her face changed. She went swiftly to him and touched him on the shoulder. He had been looking gloomily out of the window, and he turned toward her.

"Evert! you have not thought—I *liked* that man?"

"Why," be began, uncomfortably, "I thought you seemed to have taken a sort of fancy to his society——"

"Oh, Evert!"

"I'm not finding fault, my dear. You've a

right to choose your own friends, and——"

"But I could never have him for a *friend!* How could you have thought that? Why, Evert, he was not *nice* at all. You did not like him yourself, did you?"

"I didn't like him—no, not exactly. I won't say I disliked him, though. He was a good enough little fellow, I suppose."

"Good! I am not so sure he was good. That is as you look at it. I should not want to have you *good* like that. Why, Evert, do you know, he was engaged to a girl out there, and when he found that if he married her he could not afford to study and be a clergyman, he has gone to her and broken it off? What do you think of that?"

The Doctor smiled with more mirthfulness than before.

"That's his own business, my dear—his and the young woman's."

"But he has gone to her and told her about it, and how he had to choose between her and being a clergyman, and they have prayed together, and he has made her think the way he did, and she has let him go. For me, I think it was a shame. I think it was cruel—and I have told him so."

The Doctor laughed outright this time.

"Well, just there I think you exceeded your duty, Midge. That was a question of morals that it isn't for us to pass on. And it seems that the young woman consented."

"That was because she was a woman. But she was not young. She was thirty."

"Then she was old enough to know her own mind."

"But would *you* have done such a thing?" demanded the Midge, indignantly: "would you give up a woman you have loved, for anything —for anything in the world? I think it is wicked!"

"I'm not speaking for myself, Midge. But I'm not running Mr. Pratt's conscience. I dare say he thought it was right, or he wouldn't have done it."

"He thought it was right—maybe. But he ought not to have thought it was right. You know it was wrong, Evert; and you would never have told me to do such a thing. Only you are so good to other people, you will never say they are wrong. But now do you see why I disliked him?"

"You don't seem to have approved of him, for a fact," said the Doctor, putting his arm around her.

"And don't you see why I had to be nice to him? For he thought he was right, and that was what made it so—disgusting. Don't you understand why I let him talk to me, Evert?" she pressed, nestling up to him.

"Because you are a woman?" suggested the Doctor, laughing.

"Ah, now you are making fun of me," she said, smiling herself as she slipped out of his arm.

"And I have to set the table for dinner. See—it is ten minutes of six. You must go and get yourself ready; and I have not changed my dress. Only do not ever tell me again that he could be my *friend.*"

XII

THE January wind blew in through the open front door of the old house on Washington Square, and brought a smell of cooking up to Dr. Peters's top floor, one morning shortly after New Year's. Most of the smell proceeded from the lower regions; but some of it was an importation, a separate smell hanging around a tousled, smudgy, hunted-looking little boy, who did not need a label to tell the experienced eye that he was the male "slavey" of a New York boarding-house of the third or fourth class. It is not every cheap boarding-house that has such an attendant on its domestic staff; but those that do keep him in use as boots, scullion, errand-boy, and in several other capacities, and he is just such a soiled and harried creature as stood before Dr. Peters that sharp morning, rubbing his blue nose with the sleeve of his thin jacket.

"The gen'l'm'n said to give it to you very pertickler," he said, in one breath.

The note which he handed to the Doctor read thus:

"DEAR DR. PETERS—Can I see you at once, and privately? I am in no end of trouble. I will meet you anywhere you say—but I don't want to have *any one* know it.

"In haste, yours,

"PAUL HATHAWAY."

The Doctor sent a line in reply: "Come here in half-an-hour—we shall be alone," and the boy went down stairs three steps at a time tossing a coin into the air and singing a pæan of his own to an air of the day:

"O-o-oh! dat dime he gimme,
O-o-oh dat dime he gimme,
Good old chump wid a mustash on—
Golden slippers in de mawn!"

The Doctor listened, smiled, half-sighed, and smiled again. Then he turned from the door, and faced the Midge, dressed to go out for her household shopping. She had long been considered "equal to the exigencies of the situation."

She was very pretty to look at, and rather patrician, in her way, as she stood, erect and graceful, in her trim seal-skin sacque, a neat, Frenchy bonnet on her small, shapely, well-poised head.

"I shall not be long, Evert," she said.

"Well," he suggested, "you needn't hurry home this morning."

She showed her white, even little teeth in a mischievous smile.

"Oh, you are tired of my society!"

"Not exactly tired, Midge—only a little fatigued, so to speak. No, dear—there's somebody coming here on business. And if you want to take the opportunity to call on your dressmaker and see if there aren't some new duds that you absolutely don't need—why, you've got a good excuse."

"Ah, no!" she persisted, maliciously: "You cannot deceive me. You want to get rid of me. Very well, I will stay out until you are anxious to have me back, and put an advertisement in the papers—'Midge: Return to your penitent Evert. I will never turn you out again—E. P.' "

As might have been expected, to a young woman of the Midge's sense of humor, the "personal" columns of a well-known morning paper had no terrors. She finished her imaginary quotation with a saucy, dainty nod and wink, and marched off to her shopping.

She had scarcely got out of the house when Hathaway entered. One glance told the Doctor that the "no end of trouble" was no exaggeration. The color had gone out of the handsome face, and the blue eyes were filled with the over-burdening, all-absorbing anxiety of the young spirit in its first encounter with misfortune, when the moment's cloud makes black the whole universe, and there never, no, never, was such another woe upon earth.

"What's the matter, Hathaway?"

"Everything's the matter!" said the young man, dropping into a chair; "I'm a scamp and a blackguard, and I'm being punished as I deserve. That's what's the matter."

"Oh, come, my boy—it's not so bad as all that."

"Yes it is. I haven't the slightest claim on your sympathy, or—or—any one's sympathy. I don't know why I've got the audacity to come to

you, and if you tell me that you can't help me—why, I'll admit it's all I'm worth."

"Well, well," said the Doctor, encouragingly, "let's have the whole damnation. What is it?"

Hathaway silently handed him a letter. It was written on thin paper, in a foreign hand, and dated from Valparaiso. The English was most un-English; but the meaning of the communication was clear. The Doctor read it through carefully.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the boy. He sat with his elbows on his knees, resting his forehead on his hands.

The Doctor shook his head, gave a long, low whistle of dismay, and walked to the window, where he stood for a minute staring vacantly out at the wind-swept square.

"Well," he said at last, "you'd better tell me all about it."

"There isn't much to tell," Hathaway began, in a choking tone, as if it hurt him to talk. "We were at Valparaiso a good deal, off and on. We were up and down the coast all through those rows they had down there—it was two years ago, you know. And we got to going—a lot of us fellows—to this old man's house—this Garcia. We found out afterward that it was a regular gambling-place, in a shy sort of way, and he got about all the money we had—'twasn't much. And I got terribly gone on this girl—she was his eldest daughter, and she was handsome—beautiful—in that Southern way. I don't want to see anybody like her again, though.

I was in love with her—or I thought I was—I don't know. I know I was a fool about it. The fellows all said so. And I suppose I did ask her to marry me—yes, I did—but that was only in the first of it, when I didn't know what sort of girl she was. Afterward—why, I never thought she'd dream of such a thing as holding me to it. I'd cut my throat before I'd think of it." He clinched his hands and fairly shuddered.

The Doctor looked over the letter again.

"Is it genuine, do you think, this business? Or is it blackmail?"

"I don't know," the young man groaned.

"What's the standing of the family?"

"It's hard to say. I don't know what to tell you. They have been respectable, certainly—I guess they had a good deal of money once. The old man is nothing but a shark and a sharper now, and I suppose they're a pretty bad lot all around. But I can't go to work to prove *that,* you know."

"Let's see"—the Doctor referred once more to the letter: "when does he say he'll send his charges to Washington?"

"They must be there now. You see, he threatens to do it if he doesn't hear from me within two months. And it's dated in October. You see, he thought I was on the *Wequetequock,* at Rio, and she hasn't been at Rio. The accursed thing has lain there over one mail and then been forwarded. I got it last night."

"But you haven't heard from Washington?"

"I haven't yet; but I shall soon enough; and it

will be the end of me, Doctor. They're lax enough about most things, in the navy; but that's the kind of thing they won't stand from a fellow in my position. They'll make an example of me, just as they did of Willy Blackford. Oh, it's a bad business, Doctor."

"Yes, it is," said Dr. Peters, laying his hand on the bowed shoulder; "but we must try to make the best of it. Come, look up and look it in the face."

Hathaway did look up, after a moment.

"By Jove, Doctor, you're a good man!"

"Never mind about that. Let's get at the facts in the case. I want to know all about it. How old was this—this friend of yours?"

"I don't know." A tinge of red came into his pale cheeks. "The boys said she was thirty; but I don't believe she was more than twenty-six or so."

"And you were—how old?"

"I was twenty-one the day we first got to Valparaiso."

"That's two years ago?"

"Yes."

"Why have they waited so long to follow you up?"

"I suppose they thought we were coming back. We went down the coast to look after some privateer, or something, and then we got orders to come home. I can't explain it."

"Looks crooked," said the Doctor, cheerfully.

He continued his examination, with encouraging results. Things began to look better, at least from the point of view of morality. Hathaway was frank and self-accusatory. He made no attempt to justify himself; and it was evident that he had done wrong. But it was also evident that it was the wrong-doing of an inexperienced, impulsive boy, under the influence of a woman much older than himself, and with whom he was foolishly in love. It seemed probable that he was the victim of a family conspiracy. He had had, at the time, a few hundred dollars, a legacy from his uncle, and he had spent it all at Valparaiso. This might have given ground for a belief that he was wealthier than most of his set.

He was utterly penitent, humble and ashamed; that was certain. It was not merely the fear of the consequences; the wound he had dealt his own honor and his own sense of self-respect seemed to trouble him more than anything else.

"It isn't the being discharged," he moaned. "I'm willing enough to get out of the service—but it's the going out in this awful way. Or, if I were accused falsely, I shouldn't mind it so much. But I feel so mean and degraded—I can't look *anybody* in the face."

"It's not so sure that you are going out of the service," Dr. Peters put in. "And you've got to look me in the face while we resolve ourselves into a committee on ways and means."

They began to talk of the possibilities of help to be got from Hathaway's superior officers. He

had been something of a favorite on ship-board, he owned, with another blush.

"Captain Chester is as good an old boy as ever walked, and I know he'd give me a hand, if he could. But he got into trouble in Blackford's case, and I believe he got an awful wigging from General Beecham, and——"

"Beecham? General Beecham?" repeated the Doctor, "not Buel Beecham—? he's no sailor."

"That's the man. I know he's no sailor; but he's a grand mogul in the Navy department, all the same: and he sits up there at Washington and bullyrags old men who were in the service before he was born, and who have forgotten more about their business than he ever knew."

"Buel Beecham," said Dr. Peters, meditatively. "Buel Beecham—General Buel Beecham. You don't say so!"

"He's a terrible old martinet, you know. And they all ko-tow to him. It was he who said that Willy Blackford must be made an example of, and that he'd see that it was done. Oh, he'll look after *me.*"

The Doctor crossed the room to the mantelpiece, filled his pipe, lit it, and smoked a good three minutes—three minutes is a long time—in solemn silence. Hathaway sat with his hands in his pockets, gazing into the fire, a heavy despair on his young face. There was no sound in the room, save the Midge's latest adopted kitten, "scratching for luck" on the table leg. When she had scratched and stretched enough, she stole over to

Hathaway, and rubbed against his feet. He looked down at her and stooped to caress her, and then suddenly drew back with a nervous start, sprang to his feet and stood irresolutely looking from the Doctor to the door, and back again.

The Doctor rose and spoke deliberately.

"Hathaway, I'm going to Washington."

"*Sir!*"

"I'm going to Washington to-night. Whether this charge is pressed now or hereafter, it's none too soon to look after the case. I think I may be able to do something for you. Mind! I don't promise you anything. But I *may* have the power to help you, and if I can I will."

"Oh, Doctor—Doctor Peters!" the young man began—"what can I say to——"

"You can't say anything. Don't try to. All I want to hear from you is this—" he came closer, and took hold of Hathaway by both shoulders. They were nearly of a height, the young man and the older.

"I want you to promise me one thing. Never—never again to give yourself a chance to ask yourself whether you've acted like an honorable man or not."

"I promise, so help me God!" cried Paul Hathaway, with the tears in his blue eyes.

. . . . . .

"Midge," said the Doctor that evening, "I'm going to Washington."

"To Washington? And when?" She looked

up with a bright anticipation of pleasure in her eyes.

"To-morrow."

"Oh! I can't get ready so soon."

"There is no occasion for you to get ready, my dear. Who said anything about your going?"

"But you aren't going anywhere without me, are you?" She opened her eyes wide.

"I am, though. Yes, dear"—he put his arm about her—"it's a business trip, unfortunately. We'll make a pleasure-trip of it some day; but this time I shall have to go alone. I'm not particularly hankering after the job, anyway; but I'll have to attend to it all by myself."

"It isn't—the gun?" She spoke with a shade of incredulous apprehension.

"No, it isn't the gun. Fact is——" he frowned, and spoke hesitatingly, "it is not my own business at all. It's something I've taken in hand for young Hathaway."

"Oh, how good of you, Evert! Is it about his getting out of the navy?"

"Well—yes. It's more or less connected with that."

She laid down her book, and rose and came to him, taking his hand and patting it with a sort of admiring caress.

"And you are going to help him? You are so nice, Evert! You are always doing such things. What is it that he wants you to do?"

The Doctor frowned again, in perplexity.

"I don't think I can exactly tell you, Midge.

He—he wouldn't like it. It's a matter of private business, and—and—I'm sure he wouldn't want to have me talk about it."

She moved away with a short "Oh!" and the Doctor stood in uncomfortable doubt.

"Of course, I did not mean to ask, if it is anything private," the Midge began again, after a moment. "I did not know. If he has told you not to tell me——"

"Oh, no, he didn't," the Doctor interrupted, hastily. "Nothing of the sort. He didn't say a word about you. Only—it's a private sort of thing—and I don't feel at liberty to talk about it without his permission."

He was really at a loss. He had never had a secret from the Midge, and the situation was very unpleasant to him. He wanted to give her some hint that Hathaway was in trouble; but he knew her too well to risk it. He could foresee the questions she would ask him. She would not inquire into the nature of the difficulty; but, sooner or later, she would ask if Hathaway had done anything wrong, and she would receive his answer with absolute confidence. What was he to say?

"It isn't that I don't trust you, Midge," he began, awkwardly; but she came back to him with a bright laugh, and rubbed her cheek against his shoulder, and talked to him as though he were a child.

"Oh, you dear old thing—I understand! Did you think I was angry?" She grasped the lapels of his coat, and pretended to shake him. "It is

just like you. You are the soul of honor, and you are just *conscience* all over, and I am glad of it. There!"—and she kissed him—"What do I want to know about your Mr. Paul Hathaway? Go and get your traveling-bag, and I will pack it for you. How many shirts do you want?"

The next evening Dr. Peters was in Washington. He slept that night at a hotel, and went down to breakfast the next morning at the common table, where no Midge sat opposite him, bright and fresh in flowery Watteau morning-wrapper. He did not like it at all, and in spite of his strange surroundings, through all his sense of discomfort and disturbance, he somehow felt as if it were the Midge who had gone away from him, and not he who had left the Midge behind.

XIII

GENERAL BUEL BEECHAM sat at his desk and listened rather impatiently to Dr. Peters. General Beecham was gray-bearded, with a thin, cold, rather handsome face —a New England face; the face of a man certainly self-conscious, selfish perhaps, intelligent, determined, and strong in the kind of pride that comes dangerously close to morbid vanity.

The Doctor was talking slowly but earnestly, in his low, even voice. General Beecham listened; but he played with a paper-knife, and looked out of the window, where the January breeze was whirling a thin faint fall of snow hither and thither.

"I really don't see what I have to do with this matter," he said irritably, as the Doctor paused. "I have no connection at all with the case, Mr.—Mr. Peters. You appear to think that it rests with me to determine what shall be done. You are in error. And even if—even if I had the influence you suppose me to have, I should see no reason—no reason whatever—for interfering. I am sorry for your young friend, of course; but, as far as I can judge from what you have said, he is unquestionably guilty of a grave offense against the honor of the service, and an offense that calls for exemplary punishment. I certainly should not let

my private feeling of pity for the young man interfere with my obvious duty as a public officer. And I may say, Mr.—Mr.—excuse me—Mr. Peters, that if you knew to whom you were speaking, you would hardly proffer such a request." He had worked himself up into something like indignation —a sublimated testiness, as though he felt that he ought to feel offended.

"I rather think I know you, General Beecham," said Dr. Peters, in the same quiet, slow way.

General Beecham's lower jaw suddenly set itself against the upper with a peculiar and significant firmness.

"I don't understand you, sir."

The Doctor was unmoved.

"Seems to me I've met you before, General. I was in the soldiering way once myself, and you were a colonel then. Met you only once; but I think you'll remember it if I recall the circumstances to you. You inquired my name then, and, if my memory is correct, I didn't give it to you. But I guess you remember me, all the same. You had your quarters at old Mammy Chapin's then, back of Vicksburg, and the time I met you was the time I took a young man to you who had made a bad slip, and who was sorry for it afterwards."

"Yes," said General Beecham: "I think I know you now."

He spoke almost mechanically. His face had suddenly grown stern and troubled. He sat perfectly still, holding the paper-knife balanced in his hand, his eyes still staring out of the window,

where the snow-powder whirled in the wind. The Doctor followed his gaze with a glance as absent and absorbed. He did not see the snow or the January sky. His memory was full of a day of summer heat, of dust-laden air, trembling under an intolerable glare of blue sky.

Captain Evert Peters, U. S. A., had been riding up the road that ran over the hills near the river, stretched across the broad depression that lay between them and the rise of ground far to the west, and disappeared on the hazy horizon.

He had been over a year at the front; but he had no stomach for the ride along that road. There had been some sharp fighting down below, near the old Waters place; the federal attack had been repulsed three or four hours before, and ever since daybreak the wounded had been coming in, some in ambulances, some in ox-carts. The heavy vehicles labored along in a low-hanging cloud of dust. Captain Peters, riding leisurely back toward his quarters, got sick of passing the long train with its endless succession of suffering faces. They were silent, the most of the wounded, but they were hot and thirsty and worn out with pain and fatigue; and sometimes they groaned or swore or asked vainly for the water that was not at hand. Just as he turned from the road to follow a bridle-path that led across the fields, a team of oxen lumbered by, drawing a heavy wagon. In the bottom lay three men, one with a blanket over his legs. A negro drove, sitting sidewise on the high seat, his legs swinging over the front wheels. He

was whistling with amiable cheerfulness; but he stopped his music to answer a low moan from the man with the blanket over his legs.

"D'r ain't none, honey," he said, soothingly: "I done tol' you a piece back dah wa'n't none. I'm dreffle dry myse'f, honey—fo' Gawd I wisht I had some water myse'f—I do, shuah." His tone had an exaggerated earnestness, as if he were sympathizing with a child, and he spoke of his own need of water as a consoling consideration.

Captain Peters shook his canteen—it was empty. With a sigh for the cruelty of it all—he had got beyond the first case-hardened period of soldierly indifference—he jerked his horse's head to one side and left the road behind him.

"Seems as though they ought to have *water,* anyway," he said to himself.

The bridle-path ran through a piece of woods, and Captain Peters took off his cap as he entered the quiet shade. His eyes rested gratefully on the cool spaces among the trees. He felt for a moment a sense of relaxation; of being out of the ugly business; a more than physical relief. It was only for a moment, however; the sight of a man and a horse ahead of him brought him up with tense muscles and alert nerves.

The man stood by the horse, tightening the saddle-girth. He was hardly a man, the captain saw, at a second glance. He was tall and well built; but he could not well have been sixteen years old. His clothes were ragged and worn, and much too small for him. The strained, patched shirt of

blue flannel was too tight at the collar to button around his neck, and the short sleeves showed half of his white forearm. The clothes and the man did not belong together. The man gave the lie to his garments.

Captain Peters had a good minute in which to make these observations. His horse had stepped softly on the grass, and the boy did not look up until he had finished his work at the girth. Then he turned on the Captain a handsome, thin-featured young face, that went from a ghastly white to a furious red. The Captain knew the face. He had seen it two days before, at the railroad station.

"That's Beecham's boy," some one had said. "He's come down to serve on the general's staff, with his father. Beecham took him out of school to bring him here."

"Looks too pretty for practical use," some one else had commented.

"Young man," said Captain Peters, gravely, "what are you doing here?"

The boy began to pull at the girth again, his face away from the speaker.

"I don't know what business that is of yours, sir," he replied with tremulous insolence.

"*I* do," said the Captain: "clk!"

He gave a click with his tongue, at which his horse raised his head. The boy started, and, looking up, followed with his eyes the line in which the young officer's outstretched forefinger pointed. There was a small morocco traveling satchel lying

on the ground at the feet of Beecham's boy.

"Pick that up," said Captain Peters, calmly: "lead that horse of yours—that girth 'll do as it is—and come along with me."

"And suppose I won't?" asked the boy, his blood once more in his cheeks.

"I'll shoot you, my son," said the Captain.

Young Beecham looked at him, and breathed hard and fast for a few irresolute moments.

"What right have you——?" he began.

"It's no use talking, my boy," the Captain interrupted, with grim good nature; "*Anybody* has got the right. Does your father know what you're doing?"

The question, suddenly and vigorously put, was too much for the boy. He threw up his hands in a wild way, and his voice was broken with half-hysterical sobs, as he cried out:

"No! I don't care! no, he doesn't. Yes, I'm running way. That's it. You may call me a coward or anything else you want to. I don't care—I don't care, I say! I can't stand it. It makes me sick. I didn't know what it was—I thought I wanted to come here—but I didn't know what it was. I'm not afraid of being killed—if any one says so, he's a liar. I'd rather die than see it all. Oh, it's awful—awful!" He pressed his palms to his eyes, his fingers clutching his head. "I've been up since five o'clock, watching them come in," he went on; "and it almost drove me crazy. For God's sake, take me anywhere—anywhere

where I won't see them. I don't care what you do with me—send me to prison—only let me get away from this terrible place."

The Captain's voice gave no hint of either sympathy or disdain, as he said:

"Get on that horse, young man, and come along with me."

The boy obeyed, silently. He hung his head. His eyes were wet with the ready tears of youth. They rode on together through the woods, hearing no sound save the breaking of dry twigs under their horses' hoofs, and the rustle and whirr of an occasional frightened bird, flying away at their approach.

Finally the Captain spoke.

"Who gave you those clothes?"

"These clothes?" the boy repeated, anxiously.

"Your father's servant, wasn't it?—the nigger."

Young Beecham lifted his head.

"I shan't tell you," he said. "You have no right to ask me that."

"Just so," the Captain assented; "that's a fact. I haven't."

They passed out of the woods in silence, and struck the road. They were not pushing their horses; but the pace at which they traveled brought them up with the rear of the ambulance train in a few minutes. The last wagon was the one which Captain Peters had noticed when he left the road. Something had caused it to drop behind the others. As they came alongside it, the

Captain remembered the wounded man who had asked for water.

"Is there anything in your canteen?" he demanded, turning to the boy, who was staring at the wagon load with a sickened fascination.

Beecham took the tin flask from his pocket. "There's water in it," he said.

Captain Peters rode up and hailed the negro driver, who was whistling still, but somewhat less cheerily, as though the burden and heat of the day were beginning to wear on him, too. He stopped his team, and the Captain thrust the flask over the side of the wagon. Two of the occupants were sitting propped up against the back of the seat. One was wounded in the shoulder, and the other was badly cut about the head, which was swathed in rough bandages. Both of them drank, acknowledging the attention with eager grunts. The negro looked on with mutely yearning eyes. When the second man handed the canteen back it was empty. The Captain glanced at the third man, the one who had lain with a blanket over his legs. The blanket covered his whole body now, and his upturned face.

The man with the wounded shoulder saw Captain Peters's glance, and spoke.

"*He* don't want no water no more."

The other sufferer lifted his head, swaddled in dirty white, directed a wink of sinister humor at the Captain, and said to his comrade:

"How do you know he don't, Pete?"

The Captain looked at young Beecham. He

was shaking with an aguish tremor. They hurried on, riding down the long line; and until they had taken the cross-road that led to Colonel Beecham's quarters, the boy kept his head averted, looking off the road to the bare and dusty fields.

When they came in sight of the little hill on which the old Waters house stood, Beecham grew pale and made a motion to check his horse. He saw the Captain looking at him, and he pressed on. But his boy's face expressed an emotion of mortal anguish. He was suffering as only young things can suffer.

There was a little clump of bushes and low trees near the gate of the place. When they reached it, Peters spoke, as quietly as ever.

"Stay here till I come back. You hear me?"

The boy nodded, with an effort. Captain Peters rode up to the house, and in five minutes he had said what he had to say to Colonel Beecham, and the two men were walking down to the spot where the boy stood, motionless as death, with his tortured white face turned expectantly toward them.

. . . . . .

General Beecham was more than twenty years older, his black beard had gone gray, a score of years of ambition and successful struggle had hardened his handsome features; but the face that stared in blank misery out of the window of the office in Washington was the same face that when Peters had last seen it had reflected the shame

and agony of that younger face that to-day was but a memory.

General Beecham's eyes did not leave the window as he spoke to the Doctor, in a harsh, constrained voice, picking his words with evident distaste for speaking at all.

"At the time I met you, Captain Peters—pardon me—you are Captain Peters still?"

"Plain 'mister,' now," said the Doctor.

"Captain Peters," the General resumed, with a slight inclination of his head, and a quietly dignified insistence in his tone: "I told you, at that time, that you had put me under the greatest obligation of my life. It has been the only obligation of my life. I have never——"

"Excuse me!" broke in the Doctor; and at his tone General Beecham started and wheeled round in his chair, his eyes opening wider as they rested on the speaker. "*I* told you at that time, General Beecham, that you were under no obligation whatever to me. What I did, I did not do to oblige you, or to oblige any one; but because I felt that the boy had a *right* to be judged mercifully."

There was nearly a minute of silence between the two men. Then General Beecham got up and went to the window and drummed on the pane.

"Do you know—about my boy—afterwards?" he asked, slowly.

"In Virginia?"

"Yes. He led his company, you know, when McIlvaine was shot?"

"I heard about it," said the Doctor.

General Beecham came back from the window.

"I have a letter here," he began, with an anxious eagerness in his manner, "which Crawford—Colonel John Crawford—you know him?—wrote me at the time. I'd like you to see it."

His fingers were shaky as he took out his wallet and drew from it a discolored paper, folded and cracked at the folds. He spread it out carefully, almost tenderly, before he gave it to the Doctor. Then he smiled in a wan way. "I've often wanted to meet you, Captain," he went on: "to show it to you. He was only seventeen then. He would have been thirty-nine this January, if——"

The Doctor pretended to read the paper on his lap; but he had no heart to try to make sense of it. He only remembered afterward that old-fashioned Colonel Crawford wrote: "An act of such exceptional Gallantry, performed by one so Young, merits the highest commendation from his Superior Officer."

General Beecham was again drumming on the window-pane.

"I thank you, Captain Peters," he said, somewhat awkwardly, "for pointing out to me that it was my duty to look at this matter in a rather more Christian light—to—to make allowances. I suppose we all—we all need these reminders from time to time. This has been painful to me, of course; but I am glad to have had the opportunity of letting you know how Buel—how my boy retrieved his—" he paused—"his error."

"I knew it before," said the Doctor, rising; "or I should not have spoken."

General Beecham dropped into his seat, and stroked his gray beard with a thin, nervous hand.

"Of course, of course, you understand, Captain Peters—after what you have said, I shall certainly look into this matter, and I shall see what can be done for your young friend. Your opinion of the case must naturally go a long way with me. And you must pardon me if—if I did not take this view of it, at first. The clemency of the department has been so outrageously abused—are you staying in Washington for any length of time?"

"I leave to-night," the Doctor told him.

"I should have liked to—to show you something —well, never mind."

XIV

THE weary trip from Baltimore to New York came hard on the Doctor. A sense of depression for which he could not account weighed on him with a discomfort that was almost physical. He had succeeded in his mission; yet he felt downcast and troubled. He tried to reason it out with himself, but he could not. Perhaps, he thought, it was the stirring up of old memories that had made him feel old himself. Perhaps it was merely the natural effect of a first absence from home and from the dear child whose presence made all that he meant when he said to himself, "home."

"It's my stomach," he concluded, as he got out of a University Place car at Houston Street. "I'll go to Pigault's and get a nip of brandy to settle those sawdust sandwiches at Wilmington. I shall frighten the Midge if I go home like this."

Pigault's had changed within the past year or so. It was no longer a *brasserie*—it was rather an American bar-room. The little crowd that had formerly come, night after night, to drink mild potations of beer and play long games of dominoes, had somehow melted away. The Doctor had been the first to depart; then M. Marié had gone up

town, to teach in a fashionable school (and ultimately to run away with a German brewer's daughter, and to be forgiven and made a slave of authority among the slaves in the brewery counting-room); Mr. Martin was dead, and little Potain was in the lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island, all day long reading a newspaper aloud to an imaginary wife. And, for one reason or another, they had all deserted the place. The "young fellows" of the quarter had it pretty well to themselves now. There was a pool-table in the rear of the room. Mme. Pigault sat no more behind the desk. A barkeeper with a black moustache and a white apron mixed drinks with agility and despatch, shoved his compositions to one set of customers with his left hand, and grasped a fresh bottle in his right as he hailed the next lot with, "Well, gents, what'll it be?"

Half way down the counter swung a screen, shutting off the further half from the sight of people at the door. There was a general deterioration, moral and material, about the place; but this was its last and worst sign.

The Doctor, who had all his life drank what he had a right to drink in the face of all the world, carefully placed himself between the screen and the door, and asked for a "pony" of brandy. As the barkeeper poured it out, he heard a familiar voice at the other side of the screen. Bending forward enough to glance down the bar, he saw Piero and young Goubaud, the puffy-faced, weak, absinthe-drinking son of the house of Goubaud.

The place had indeed run down. The Doctor was no aristocrat, neither had the line of caste been sharply drawn in the old brasserie, as he remembered it; but such a couple as this would never have been allowed to hang over the bar in the days when Mme. Pigault's comely presence graced the other side of that piece of furniture. Goubaud's voice was husky, and Piero was talking so loud and laughing so much, that the Doctor felt sure that the man of maritime ways was taking a sailor's privilege.

At the moment, he was urgently asserting that some one was a good man.

"Oh, yes," he said, "he is a good man. I know 'im—ten—fifteen—twenty yeah. He good man—fairs' rate boss vair' damn good man."

Young Goubaud had his doubts about this, and expressed them with thick earnestness, reiterating after the fashion of a man who exploits an old grievance.

"I do' know," he grumbled, "I do' know 'bout zat. I tell you, seh, I do' know 'bout zat. Ouat fo' he ouant take money out my pipple's pocket fo'? I tell you, M'sieu' Piero, I tell you, seh, he don't had no right fo' to take zat ge'l away f'om w'eh she ouas sen' to bo'd. I tell you, M'sieu' Piero, zat ouas not ho-no-*ra*-ble—no. My poo' fazzer, zat take ze money out f'om his pocket, same you put yo' hand in an' take it out."

"Ouell," said Piero, consolingly, "zat all a-ight now—he don' kip her no mo', I guess. Zat young

fel', he take her away prit' soon, I guess. She laike young man betteh as ol' man."

"Zat se'v him raight, M'sieu' Piero," said young Goubaud, with Rhadamanthine severity: "I tell you, M'sieu' Piero, I tell *you*——"

Piero laughed loudly, the humor of the situation growing on him.

"I guess he don' kip her fo' himse'f no more—young fel' get her—ol' man ain't got no show." And he laughed still more noisily.

The Doctor, facing the screen, half raised his clenched fists. Then a look of disgust came over his face; the steely fire went out of his eyes, and he turned away, and walked out of the place utterly sick at heart.

The barkeeper looked at the untouched glass and the quarter of a dollar lying beside it. He poured the brandy back into the bottle. "Old gent seems to be pretty well rattled," he said to himself. Then he put the quarter in the till, took out ten cents in change, and carefully put the ten cents under the cheese-safe at the end of the bar, where there were various other coins already deposited.

. . . . . .

The Doctor could hardly bear to go on his way and meet the Midge, yet he did, and so controlled himself that she saw only his obvious fatigue and exhaustion. She made him go through the motions of eating a bit of supper, and gave him a glass of the hottest hot punch that affection and

boiling water could produce, and then sent him to bed. She had asked him nothing about the business on which he had gone—not even whether he had been successful or no. She had only expressed her delight at having him back, treating him royally to her rare kisses, and rallying him brightly on his desertion of her. And he had taken caresses and had returned them, with a sense of absolute shame, with a feeling of guilt, as though he were receiving something under false pretenses.

When he got into his own room—he did not go to bed—he tried to think it all over. It was shocking—it was shameful—but he had to admit that it was something that he should have foreseen. It was a vile thing that there should be people to talk and think as those two louts in the bar-room had talked and thought. But then he had always known what the world was. Was any one to blame—except himself—because he had found out what he ought to have expected, if he had used his brains? He had been watching the Midge, furtively, in the half hour during which she had let him sit up and be nursed and petted. But he had had no need to make the inspection. From the moment that he had heard Piero's speech the Midge had ceased to be the Midge to him—she had become a woman. He marveled how it was that he had looked at her before and had made no more of her sex than if she had been his sister, or a piece of furniture. He could never think of her in that way again. She was a woman. She was not only a woman, but a pretty woman. And more

than that, she was a charming and fascinating woman, radiant with that mysterious power which is given to some women irrespective of beauty or cleverness—the power of making men admire and love and worship and long for them.

He had seen it all before, of course, but he had not been conscious that he saw. Now he saw, indeed. He had looked at her a thousand times with fond affection, as she moved about the rooms, busying herself with little duties, singing softly to herself, fetching and carrying this or that for his comfort and convenience. But she had been in a way, a part of him, a part of his life. He had had no consciousness of her as a distinct being—as one of the women who make up the other half of our world. Now, all of a sudden, he could look at her from a distance, and take note and cognizance of her as though she were a stranger. Now, for the first time, it meant something to him that she was graceful as she moved, as she lifted her head, as she turned her delicate white wrists; that her face was full of quick changing expressions; that her voice had tones like music, mysteriously expressive, provoking, alluring; that she could, when she pleased, turn to him and make manifest in her whole bearing a thought of love or tenderness that was in itself a caress. He did not formulate this in clean-cut thought; but as an emotion it was forcibly present and real to him. And in all the whirl of puzzled feeling and thinking in which he found himself, one idea came over and over again to him, and he drove it angrily away, and tried to

put it aside, and was ashamed that it should come back to him—over and over again.

. . . . . .

The next day he went to see Paul Hathaway. Mr. Hathaway was living in a certain caravansary in Clinton Place, that did not call itself a lodging house, but that had "furnished rooms to let." It had been a grand old house in its time. The mahogany folding-doors were there still, though they never rolled back in their grooves, opening the great archway between the two parlors; for an actress had the back parlor, and a chiropodist was in front. A great many people knew that old house who would not care to boast of their acquaintance with it. Many lively and rather disreputable young Bohemians, and many dull and respectable dry-goods clerks have occupied those dingy rooms. The men who gave that word "Bohemian" its meaning to New Yorkers, men who live now only as traditions; men who have reformed themselves into Philistine solidity, men who have made themselves great and honored in literature; men who are still staking body and soul against drink and poverty and general degradation—scores of such men have taken their turn in that queer lodging-house, and have gone on their hurried way through youth.

Many a bright boy has clattered over the marble pavement of that great hall-way, swung himself up the mighty spiral staircase, bolted into his little room on the third or fourth floor, and found

the letter there from the great magazine, respectfully declining his poem. Then he has cursed the magazine for a ring-ridden humbug, run by a clique of selfish, old-fashioned harpies of literature, in league with that hypocritical dunderhead, the complimentary, polite, regretful, manuscript-returning editor. And he has dashed off, of a Saturday night, maybe, to forget it and seek a happier world in the wretched holes so near at hand, with vile drink and with viler company. And on the morrow he has wakened to find in a headache and an empty purse the result of all such experiments in consolation, and he has sent off a letter to—well, the likeliest man he knew, asking for a dollar or two, for God's sake: and if the dollar or two came, he has bought brandy and soda, and has sat him down to write a poem on his headache, which he has sent to the magazine he cursed the night before, and to which he has sworn a hundred times never to apply again, and from which he surely gets back that liberal-spirited lay. And if the dollar or two did not come, why, he lay in bed, and listened to the church-bells, and crawled out when the freshness of the day was gone, to wait, breakfastless, for dinner-time.

What becomes of such boys? One whom I knew, lodging in that very house, is now a "prominent" leather-dealer in the swamp. He would draw his check for a thousand dollars if I would let him destroy that scrap-book of his poems now in my possession. Another is the distinguished

and successful *littérateur*—there is a point where a successful writer ceases to be a literary man and clearly becomes a *littérateur*—who is now in Europe, purchasing choice olive-wood for his library shelves. A third is in a little cemetery near Schenectady, where the Seneca grass fills the wind with its old-time scent all summer long.

The Doctor climbed the long dark sweep of three stairs, and entered Hathaway's tiny room, where the yellow walls were covered with water-color sketches. There were other sketches tied up in a bundle, and the open trunk was evidently in process of packing. The Doctor saw it and smiled. He had been a boy, and had discounted Fate, in his time.

Hathaway looked haggard and tired; but his eyes were brighter, for the Doctor had sent him a cheery note from Washington, and his sky had begun to clear already. Still, he was very humble and gentle, and his humility and submission seemed strangely out of keeping with his bright, aggressive youth.

He gave the Doctor his one chair, and sat on the bed, which was not yet made up, while he listened to the report. He thanked his friend gratefully and simply; but his cheerfulness did not come back to him. He went over his story again, and the Doctor learned of a number of palliative facts which the boy had been too proud to adduce in his own defense while his fate was in the balance.

When it was done, the Doctor sat looking at the young man, as he lay half-stretched-out on the

tumbled bed. Neither spoke for a while, and then Hathaway said, staring hard at the small pillow, out of which he was trying to pluck a feather:

"I suppose, after this, sir, that you'll object—that is, that you won't want—that you had rather I wouldn't see Miss Lois—Miss Talbot."

The Doctor rose, thrust his hands into his trousers pockets, and stood looking down at his boots.

"No," he said, after a while, drawing in his breath through his closed lips, and speaking thoughtfully: "no, my boy, I had rather you *would* see her. That is, if it's going to prevent you from seeing—the kind of thing you *have* seen."

"You're too—too devilish good to me, Dr. Peters," cried the boy.

"Nonsense," said the Doctor, absent-mindedly. He was thinking how the Midge and he between them could be of help to young Hathaway.

"Do you, don't you think—perhaps I ought—" the young man began, stammering. The Doctor smiled.

"I think not, Hathaway," he said: "there's no reason why she should ever know anything about it. It's closed and done with now, and you know more than you did, and we might as well drop the subject. Besides"—his face grew grave—"women can not be made to look at these things as men do. You don't want to think of it." He grew graver still as he considered the possibility. He knew the Midge's code of honor—his own, passed through the close, small filter of a woman's

ignorant purity. He shook his head and put the question aside. "Come around to-morrow evening," he said: "I shall probably have heard from Washington by that time."

When Hathaway came around that next evening, the Doctor had heard from Washington. General Beecham wrote that Mr. Hathaway would be permitted to resign, without further investigation into the charges already preferred, and that Señor Garcia had been informed that if he was wise he would refrain from pressing his demands, and would thus avoid certain inquiries which our representatives would otherwise be instructed to make into his financial transactions with certain gentlemen in the naval service of the United States.

The letter enclosed to Captain Peters an item from a newspaper of 1864, giving an account of the erection of a tablet in the college chapel at Williamstown, to the memory of Lieutenant Buel Beecham, the gallant young soldier, who fell in the Battle of the Wilderness—a tribute from his affectionate classmates.

. . . . . .

As he was on his way home from Clinton Place, the Doctor met Father Dubé, slowly pacing down past the dreary gray front of the University building, which looked, that dull winter day, more than ever like some huge pasteboard toy.

The two men greeted each other warmly, for they had not met often of late.

"I have not seen you in an age," said the Father, pressing Doctor Peters's hand. "Give me news of yourself, and of the little one. She is not married yet, eh?"

"No," replied the Doctor, uneasily; "I can't find any man good enough for her."

"No," assented Father Dubé; "I know but one, and he is—too modest."

His eyes made his meaning clear. The Doctor flushed hotly. Dubé laid a large hand on his shoulder.

"Why should I not say it," he remonstrated, kindly. "I am sure it would be for the best, for both of you. It is only we priests who ought not to marry. For you others, it is a duty."

"You oughtn't to talk in that way to a man of my age, Dubé," said the Doctor. He was awkward and uncomfortable, and conscious of himself.

"Of your age? What is your age? You are forty—forty-five?"

"Forty-six."

"Bah! what is that? You are young—you are strong; you lead a good life—you are young. I am sixty-four. It is not so terrible to be sixty-four. Why should you not marry? Why not? Will some stranger—the first boy you meet—will he be so kind to her as you? Ah, well, I have said enough. You will not come to me when you marry. But I will bless you all the same. Good-bye, my friend."

The Doctor walked rapidly across the Park.

He felt like a boy, like a fool, but his heart was beating fast, and he was saying to himself, while his cheeks burnt:

"Why not?—why not?"

XV

WHY not? He had refused to entertain the thought; he had turned it away from him and bade it begone. But it had been brought back to him, and now that he was forced to let it in, and to look it in the face, what was there about it that should make him refuse it hospitality? It was not a mean or unworthy thought—it seemed, indeed, when once he looked at it face to face, simple, natural and beautiful. After all, wherein was it strange? When a man and a woman loved each other, they married. And did not he love this woman, and did not she love him? Only—was it with the same love?

Ah, he was gone. From the moment that he asked himself that question, and that the answering doubt came with its sudden chill to his heart, the Doctor had slipped from the safe ground of pure reason, and was groping about in that dim wild dreamland of uncertainty in which, since time began, every lover has walked his appointed time; in which every lover shall walk until time shall end. There are no exemptions or exceptions, there are no classes or conditions for those who enter that strange limbo. Great or small, wise or foolish, they wander hither and thither in the mist, led by flickering lights and great revealing flashes,

cast down in deathly darkness, and wakened again by a warm glow on the far horizon. And so they must wander, until they go out of the place by one of two gates. And for those that go out by the one gate, the light of the morning is on their faces; and for those that go out by the other gate, may God have pity on them!

He was no better off now, for all his years and his brains and his doctoring and his soldiering, than the veriest boy that ever tied his heart to a ribbon or went at night to look at a common brick-and-mortar house because of a woman sleeping somewhere in it.

He had to ask the same question of Fate, and to ask it with the same knowledge that the answer could not be affected by any will or wish of his of the woman he loved. It was to be, or it was not to be, and he, and she, perhaps, must wait for the revelation.

He was at his own door before he knew it, and he found himself wondering how he should meet the Midge. Two minutes later, he found himself meeting her and talking with her calmly and quietly, without embarrassment, without confusion, with no sense of awkwardness whatever.

For the first time he looked at this comrade of years, at this child grown a woman under his care; and knew that he wanted her for his wife. As far as he could make out, he ought to have been nervous and constrained. Perhaps he ought to have been ashamed of himself. But, as a matter of fact, he was not nervous, or constrained, or

ashamed. He did not understand the change in his own attitude; but he was conscious of it. An hour before, he had blushed at the mere idea. Now he was as shameless about it as if he had been King Cophetua and she a beggar-maid with no choice in the matter.

In truth, as he looked at her and listened to her, he was aware within himself of a certain feeling of triumphant superiority. It was for him to take this dear and lovely creature by the hand and to say to her: "You thought that this was all—this sweet companionship and tender affection. But there is more—infinitely more and infinitely better, and I will lead you to it."

The Midge went to bed early that evening, as though in obedience to some unspoken wish of his. He wanted to be alone; to "have a think," and he had it, by the fire, far into the night. He had looked forward to this hour of self-counsel, but when it came, it was not what he had expected it would be. He had thought that he would reason out with himself the question of his right to love the Midge. He found that he regarded that question as settled; that he looked upon it as an accepted premise, upon which he could base—upon which he was basing his calculations for the future. He was surprised at this; he had not yet realized that when a man is in love, his intellectual faculties are handed over to the control of the mysterious power within him which takes him in charge and makes an inspired fool of him; and that he himself does not know how he will argue

out the simplest problem in the privacy of his own mind. But it seemed to him that, in some mysterious way, he had quite settled this one thing. Indeed, if he thought at all of the past, it was only to try to trace this new love back over the lines of the old; to identify the two, and to prove to himself that they had always been the same; that from the first he had loved her with this very love, that had only been disguised as something like parental affection until the time came for its disclosure as a greater and higher thing.

But most of his thoughts—which were not thoughts, he found; rather imaginings—dealt with the present and the future.

One idea came to him, at first with a chill, then with a sudden glow of pleased and suggestive anticipation—that *she* did not know all this: that *she* must be taught to love—must be wooed. He must begin a courtship. Indeed, he felt as though he had yet to be introduced to the woman he had to court.

Just here, the Doctor's memory took an odd backward twist. He remembered certain boyish thoughts of a certain Alida Jansen, and he understood now why he had been glad when he woke up in his little attic bed-room, and thought that singing-school was to be held that night.

The courtship began the next day, but not quite in the way the Doctor had planned. He was much surprised to find that his manner toward the Midge had already changed, unconsciously and

involuntarily. It distinctly asserted a masterful superiority.

Beyond this, he did not make any active move. And for the next few days, in fact, for the next few weeks, he had business other than his own to attend to—and it was his custom to attend to other people's business before his own. Mr. Paul Hathaway, now out of the navy, had to be established in life as a self-supporting citizen. This was done, after a little while, more successfully than the Doctor could have hoped. The sympathies of Parker Prout and Jack Wilder being enlisted, Hathaway sold some sketches in Nassau Street, and got some odd jobs on the *Morning Record*, which was now "illustrated," with outline cuts, conceived in the utmost simplicity of art.

But all this involved a great deal of consultation and discussion and speculation among the three of them—for the Midge was at once called into their councils. Hathaway called almost every day, and they held long debates over the smallest move he took. The Midge was a modest authority in matters of art, and the Doctor was general business-adviser. The Doctor felt a particular pride in acquitting himself well of his duties. It seemed to him that he was doing himself credit in the eyes of the Midge, and he was proud and pleased when he conducted Mr. Hathaway's affairs to a fortunate issue.

And Hathaway's affairs certainly flourished. Everybody pronounced his sketches clever, and his draughtmanship worthy of an older hand. Parker

Prout said he was going to be a great artist, and there was no doubt whatever that he was facile, adaptive and intelligent. Before the spring was far advanced, he was earning a modest living for himself, and had repaid a small loan from the Doctor.

So encouraging were Mr. Hathaway's prospects that in March he engaged in a grand competition. The *New York Monthly* proposed to send a ship around the world; and a famous writer was to recount the history of the voyage. The illustrations were to be made by a famous artist, assisted by a novice in art. All novices in art were invited to compete for the honor, by sending sketches to a chosen committee of artists. The only conditions were that they should be native born and under thirty years of age. With both of these conditions Mr. Hathaway could comply. He sent in his sketches, and in due time was notified that he was one of five most promising contestants, and that the prize would be awarded to the one of these best qualified, by nature and training, for the work. Mr. Hathaway presented himself before the committee with a fluttering but confident heart.

This came about toward the end of the month, and the breath of April was in the air when, one warm evening, the Doctor and the Midge sat before the ghost of a fire. He felt honestly and innocently proud of having been able to help Hathaway, and he could hold it in no longer.

"I think our young friend is pretty fairly launched—Hathaway, I mean," he said.

The Midge was sewing, bending low over her work, so that the gaslight fell on her dark hair. She paused to give a woman's speculative, observant look at the stuff in her lap before she responded.

"You think it is all right for him—for the future?" she said.

"I think it's a sure thing for him—he's almost certain to get it."

"Then he will go away?"

"Why, yes. But it's only for a year or so. He'll enjoy the voyage."

The Midge said nothing.

"It's a grand opportunity for any young man," he went on, meditatively; "it will be the making of him in his—his business."

"Is it not dangerous?" hazarded the young woman.

The Doctor fairly laughed.

"My dear child!" he remonstrated, "after a man has been knocking about for years in one of those old tubs that we call men-of-war! Why he'll think he's safer than he's ever been before in his life."

Dr. Peters filled and lit his pipe before the Midge spoke again.

"Evert," she said, "I do not wish to ask too much, or what I should not. But there was some trouble that he was in—Mr. Hathaway—when you went to Washington. It was trouble, was it not?"

"Why, yes," he answered, doubtfully.

"I do not want to know," she hurried on,

"what it was—I do not ask that. But was it—was it something—it was nothing against him?—nothing *wrong*."

The Doctor had been prepared for this, in some sort, from the first; but it cost him a quick mental wrench to get his conscience and his logic in accord as he replied, with great firmness and decision:

"No, my dear."

He held himself justified in saying this. Whatever wrong had been done, it was repented of, atoned for, and would never be repeated. To the Doctor it was as though it had not been. What right had he even to speak of a cancelled sin as a present fact?

"No," he said once more: "if there had been anything of that kind, my dear—anything to make us alter our relations toward the lad, I should have told you. But there was not. He was indiscreet, I suppose; but—well, we're all more or less fools, all the humans made on any pattern known up to date; and he isn't any such startling variety of fool that we need to be too particular with him. No, no, he's a good boy, my dear."

"I am glad," she said softly, resting her chin on her hand as she looked into the fire. "That there was nothing *bad*—that is well. I could not *bear* it."

She spoke with emphasis. The Doctor, still smoking meditatively, nodded approvingly.

"I know how you feel about those things, my love," he said.

She began again, a little nervously.

"Evert, it—it—you do not think it strange that I ask such a question about his private affairs? He would not think it was something I had no right to ask about?"

"I should think he'd feel very much flattered at the interest you take in him," the Doctor replied, reassuringly. "Indeed, I think you have been particularly friendly and kind to him, Midge. He ought to be grateful to you."

She rose quickly, and came and seated herself on the arm of his chair.

"No, it is you who have been good to him—you need not tell me—I know it. You are good to everybody, Evert." She bent over and kissed him. He smiled with a deep gratification. It was this praise that he had wanted beyond any other reward for well-doing. "You have done *everything* for him, Evert."

"No, my dear," he corrected her, with a pleased generosity, "he's done pretty well everything for himself. You can't do much for a man. *He's* got to do the doing, in the end. Hathaway's a fine fellow. I hope he'll come back from this trip and settle down and make a position for himself, right here where we can see him. And we shan't be sorry that we gave him a lift when he first needed it, shall we, little one?" He took her disengaged hand in his. The other fluttered to and fro a dangling trail of fancy-work. The Doctor glanced at the flimsy stuff with careless interest, and smiled. He thought how happy he could be, in all the years to come, sitting thus by the fire and

seeing her work inexplicable things in soft materials of which he did not even know the names.

She did not answer his question directly; but rose, freeing herself with a motion that was almost a caress, and returned to her seat.

"You are too good to everybody, Evert," she said, giving her head a sad little shake: "you do not know it; but you are too good. Sometimes you make me wish you were not so good.'

The Doctor smiled. "I'm not so good, Midge," he said. "You may find me considerable of a bother yet. But I'm glad I've been able to be of some use to that boy Hathaway. And I rather think his future's settled—that is, in a business way. I'd like to see him safely married, though. He needs it."

"Why do you think he needs it?" asked the Midge, quietly.

The heap of glowing coals in the grate fell with a little crash into a flickering crater. The Doctor stopped to pile up the fire before he replied.

"Everybody needs it, my dear. When it's a good thing at all, it's the best thing in the world. I should like to have that boy have a fireside—" he bent over and poked vigorously at the half-kindled cannel—"a fireside, a fireside—that's the thing. I don't mean only a grate, and coal and stuff—there's a woman goes with every real, genuine fireside. That's what he wants—that's what —'most everybody else wants—a woman. A woman, Midge. A man's only half a man if one half of him ain't a woman. That's one of the

truths a man's got to learn; and I've noticed"—he smiled at the fire—"that Providence generally provides him with a teacher."

He sat, bending forward, playing with the poker, patting the lumps of cannel till they gently cracked into clean fissures that coaxed the wandering flames. He was talking as though he were talking to himself. The Midge rose abruptly, gathering up her work, and moved toward the door of her room.

"I'm tired, Evert," she said, in the hushed undertone that women use when their thoughts are apart from their speech. "I think I'll go to bed."

For a moment he made no effort to detain her; then he stretched out his hand and said:

"Aren't you going to bid me good-night?"

She turned back quickly—her hand was on the handle of the door—and kissed him on the forehead. Then she withdrew, with a pleasant rustling of garments. He sat still, smiling at the fire, until the sudden sharp ring of the door-bell below fell on his ear. He heard it sleepily, sitting back and listening with a pleased, absent-minded smile—pleased at his own thoughts. Vaguely he heard some one stumble up the stairs; then there was a knock at the door, and he rose to take a crumpled note from a sleepy messenger-boy.

The note was this:

"March 31st.

"My dear Doctor:—

"I have got the appointment. The committee accepted me without discussion. And now I have something to say to you

that will give you pain; but I cannot help it. I do not feel that I have the right to speak to her without your permission; but I want to come tomorrow, early, to ask Lois to be my wife. I know what this must be to you—but will you forgive me if I take her from you? I know that you look upon her as a daughter. I know how selfish I must seem, and, believe me, I know what I owe to you. I feel sure that she will say Yes—and if I could feel as sure that you would give us both your blessing, I should be happy.

"Gratefully and truly yours,

"PAUL HATHAWAY."

XVI

HE heard the sleepy messenger-boy thump his doubtful way down the stairs, as he read the last lines of the note.

Of course. Why had he not known it before—why had he not seen it before? He felt as if he had been asleep a long time, getting a respite from the burden of some awful truth, and had suddenly awakened to a chill dawning of inevitable consciousness.

He thought of it with a horror-stricken sense of shame, as of some omitted duty. What had he done—what had he been about to do? He had meant to ask this woman to be his wife—this woman who loved another man. It came to him with a ghastly, cold clearness that she would have struggled with herself, would have fought down her love for duty's sake, and would have married him, loving this other man, to be miserable all life long.

The cold draught from the still open door blew in on him. He was dimly conscious of it; but it seemed nothing to him beside the deeper chill that had penetrated to his inmost being, paralyzing his soul. In a blind, mechanical way he rose and moved across the room and shut the door. He thought that he staggered; but he was not sure.

His consciousness of himself seemed far removed from the flesh-and-blood automaton that got up from its seat and went to shut a door and stop a draught.

He had held the letter in his hand all the time. It was in his hand when he sat down again. With an absolutely involuntary motion, he raised it to the level of his eyes two or three times, and each time his eyes wandered away, seeing nothing save some most commonplace and meaningless bit of their surroundings—a corner of the mantelpiece, the bow of the ribbon that tied the window-curtains back, his pipe, lying on the table, half full of lifeless gray ashes.

He felt this an unpardonable weakness, and pulled himself together, with scowling brows. He read the letter half through, and then had to read it over again. He had understood the words, as each one had come under his eye; but they had been only words. They had meant nothing beyond signs and sounds. He read them now with a stern determination to drive their sense into his head.

He distinctly felt, as he began, that he was doing something hopeless, futile; a mere makeshift to fill up the time until he could command himself. But he had not read the third sentence through before his heart sprung up in him with a wild intoxication of joy. What was it, after all? This boy wanted to marry the woman *he* himself loved. Well, what of that? Had he not been warned of it? Was it not to be expected? Did it follow that

she loved *him?* What reason had he to suppose that any such absurd, wild thing was possible? He passed his hand over his eyes, like a man who tries to clear away a dream. He must have been mad to think of it. Faintly and feebly, he laughed aloud to himself, and sighed in weary relief. He had been nervous; that was it; he had dwelt so long and so earnestly on this one thought that he had grown morbid and excitable, and he had lost his self-control. It was an impossibility, an absurdity, and he must have been strangely weak to consider it at all.

Then he reflected that he would have to consider it, and this brought a certain cheering strength to him. To have something to reason out, something to employ his faculties, gave him a hold on himself. He got up again, and walked up and down the room, and tried to think it all over. What did he know positively? That Paul Hathaway was in love with the Midge; that Hathaway thought the Midge loved him. Did she love Hathaway? He could not believe that he could have been so blind as not to have seen it if she did. Yet, he remembered, and his heart sank, he had been so blind as not to see that Hathaway was in love. Had he not been blind in every direction? For the idea had been suggested to him, weeks before. But then he remembered how that idea had been suggested, and how he had put it out of his mind entirely, as an unworthy thought. He had set it aside out of pure loyalty to young Hathaway. He had refused even to think that this boy, whom he

had made his friend, could dream of stealing away from him the woman in whom his life was wrapped up.

And now he had it, in Hathaway's own hand, that this inconceivable thing was a positive fact. He grew hot with sudden anger. What right had this pink-and-white boy to come in with his boyish love, his boyish passion, his boyish, arrogant hope, to dare to think of taking this woman from him? And suppose—suppose she loved the boy? Well, again, what of it? Should a boy-and-girl fancy such as that weigh against a man's love—his own love, grown from the smallest beginnings, grown naturally into a great, consuming passion, something that, sooner or later, however she might mistake herself now, she must answer to?

He grew hotter and hotter as he walked up and down. Anger gave him a strange fluency of thought. He saw with vivid clearness how he had loved the child and the woman with a love that had changed not in nature, but only in growth. He did not think of what he had done for her; but only of what he had tried to be to her—how he had studied her tastes, her capacities, her tendencies; how he had conscientiously tried to teach her the best that he knew, to make of her the best that was in her to be.

And now this boy—this Hathaway—came in smug and smiling, and self-complacent, with his little sixpenny, sentimental fancy—this fellow who a year or two before had been swearing love and promising marriage to the common coquette

of a South American naval station. Great God! but he would put an end to this profanation—he, an honest man, with but one love to his life. Whatever pain it cost her, for the moment, whatever she or any one might think of it, at least this thing should not be. He knew, to an absolute certainty, that he had only to tell her what he knew, and Paul Hathaway would go out of her life forever. He knew she would never forgive such an outrage against love and honor. He knew what she was and what he himself had taught her, and that she could never forgive as he—fool that he was—had forgiven.

He remembered what she had once said. *"Yes, I do belong to you, Evert, I will do whatever you say, now and always."*

He strode wildly across the room to her door, meaning to throw it open—it was never locked—to go to her bedside, as he had gone many a time before to watch over her in some childish sickness, and there to tell her the truth, and leave her to struggle with and kill whatever love she might have for this fellow. But he stopped suddenly, with his hand on the door, every muscle in him cold and quivering, and he knew that he could not go into that room. Until that moment he had not known how he loved. He had thought of his love as a simple and natural affection; the growth of years; a mere development of an earlier fatherly tenderness. He knew now that it was the love of a man who wants a woman for his wife; and he knew that never, unless this woman were his wife,

could he cross the sill of her chamber, and look upon her as she lay asleep.

He turned back and went to the window, and looked out. It was faintly misty. The light of the morning sun was somewhere high in the heavens, and its dull refraction lit up all things with an even, cold light that had no life in it. He saw the great vacant Square, and the broad, red brick houses opposite. Their marble facings stared out, a dull, damp white.

If the body of your dearest friend lay in your house, there would be times when it was nothing but a corpse to you—something lifeless and not human, that claims a mocking identity with the man you loved; that is he, and is not he. You want to get it away, out of sight, this cold gray thing, that must always come between you and your remembrance of him you knew when he lived and breathed and moved, and had color in his cheeks and light in his eyes. A feeling akin to this took hold on the Doctor as he looked out of the window into this dim foredawn that was not so much night as a dead day.

. . . . . .

The day came, misty, veiled, and softly bright. It woke up the flocks of swallows in the great Square; it put touches of gold on the budding branches of the trees; it lit up the generous red brick houses with a rosy radiance not their own. It found the Doctor still looking out of the window, with his forehead resting against the frame. He

was weary, for it aroused him from a sort of stupor; and in this stupor, as he half remembered, he had thought over, in inconsecutive, irregular moments of thought, the most of his life—had seen the Midge grow up by his side, through childhood, girlhood, to womanhood and to the time of parting. For, with a sudden comprehension of the nature of his love for her, there had come a quick, instinctive conviction that she never had loved him in that way; that she never could love him in that way. He did not know how he knew this; but it came to him as a fact, which he accepted as one accepts the fact that death has come into the house.

There were certain things left for him to do in this world. There was one thing most prominent at the moment—to go into his own room, and lie down, and sleep, or make some pretense of sleeping, until such time as morning should begin for other people. It was one of the things he had to do, and he did it. All his life long he had done the things he had to do, and this was one of the last things that could greatly vex him on this side of the grave.

. . . . . .

Two hours later there was a ring at the door below that awoke him; a sound of feet on the stairs, and a knock at the door of his sitting-room. He heard Élise tell the visitor to wait for Miss Lodoiska, and heard her tramping heavily around to the side-door of the Midge's room.

He arose from the bed on which he was lying, and made himself presentable, and went into the sitting-room. Paul Hathaway was there, flushed and excited. He shook hands with him, and said a few commonplace words. Then he heard a step in the next room, and his heart leapt up to hear it. The door opened, and the Midge came out, and he saw her eyes meet Paul Hathaway's with that wonderful lightening of love which cannot be mistaken.

"I haven't slept well, Midge," he said: "I'm going out for a walk before breakfast."

He stopped as he went toward the door to take up his hat and coat that lay upon the sofa.

"Hathaway, my boy——" he began, not quite knowing why or how he spoke. The Midge ran to kiss him a quick, impulsive good-bye, and then turned to Hathaway, and the Doctor went out to take his walk.

. . . . . .

They were married in June, when Washington Square was all one flush of green. Hathaway gave up the voyage around the world. The Doctor made that the only condition, in giving his consent. And he himself so arranged matters that compliance with the condition was easy. It was a quiet wedding, in the old sitting-room. There were only two people present, beside the Doctor—Parker Prout and Professor Mannheim—and they brought their wedding gifts with them. Parker Prout had one of his own pictures—a picture on

which he had worked very hard—and Mannheim brought a stack of precious music—he, and no one else, knew how precious it was to him.

And when it was over, and they had gone away, the two of them, to a certain little house up-town, which the Doctor had inspected long ago, when he himself thought of moving from the rooms in Washington Place, he went up stairs and looked at the empty kitchen—he had sent Élise out to take a half day's holiday.

Then he went into the big pantry. In the corner, on the shelf, still lay the crock in which the Midge had hidden her head, heavy with childish grief, years before. The old stool stood before it. He sat down on it, and rested his hot forehead on the cool rim of the jar.

And that's the end of the story.

JERSEY AND MULBERRY

I FOUND this letter and comment in an evening paper, some time ago, and I cut the slip out and kept it for its cruelty:

To the Editor of the Evening ——.

Sir: In yesterday's issue you took occasion to speak of the organ-grinding nuisance, about which I hope you will let me ask you the following questions: Why must decent people all over town suffer these pestilential beggars to go about torturing our senses, and practically blackmailing the listeners into paying them to go away? Is it not a most ridiculous excuse on the part of the police, when ordered to arrest these vagrants, to tell a citizen that the city license exempts these public nuisances from arrest? Let me ask, Can the city by any means legalize a common-law misdemeanor? If not, how can the city authorities grant exemption to these sturdy beggars and vagrants by their paying for a license? The Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, it seems, provide for the punishment of gamblers, dive-keepers, and other disorderly persons, among whom organ-grinders fall, as being people who beg, and exhibit for money, and create disorder. If this is so, why can the police not be forced to intervene and forbid them their outrageous behavior?—for these fellows do not only not know or care for the observance of the city ordinance, which certainly is binding on them, but, relying on a fellow-feeling of vulgarity with the mob, resist all attempts made to remove them from the exercise of their most fearful beggary, which is not even tolerated any longer at Naples.

R.

New York, *February* 20th.

[Our correspondent's appeal should be addressed to the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor. They consented to the licensing of the grinders in the face of a popular protest.—Ed. Evening ——.]

Now certainly that was not a good letter to write, and is not a pleasant letter to read; but the worst of it is, I am afraid that you can never make the writer of it understand why it is unfair and unwise and downright cruel.

For I think we can figure out the personality of that writer pretty easily. She is a nice old or middle-aged lady, unmarried, of course; well-to-do, and likely to leave a very comfortable fortune behind her when she leaves all worldly things; and accustomed to a great deal of deference from her nephews and nieces. She is occasionally subject to nervous headaches, and she wrote this letter while she had one of her headaches. She had been lying down and trying to get a wink of sleep when the organ-grinder came under the window. It was a new organ and very loud, and its organ-grinder was proud of it and ground it with all his might, and it was certainly a very annoying instrument to delicate ears and sensitive nerves.

Now, she might have got rid of the nuisance at once by a very simple expedient. If she had sent Abigail, her maid, down to the street, with a dime, and told her to say: "Sicka lady, no playa," poor Pedro would have swung his box of whistles over his shoulder and trudged contentedly on. But, instead, she sent Abigail down without the dime, and with instructions to threaten the man with immediate arrest and imprisonment. And Abigail went down and scolded the man with the more vigor that she herself had been scolded all day on account of the headache. And so Pedro just

grinned at her in his exasperating furrin way, and played on until he got good and ready to go. Then he went, and the old lady sat down and wrote that letter, and gave it to Abigail to post.

Later in the afternoon the old lady drove out, and the fresh air did her a world of good, and she stopped at a toy store and bought some trifles for sister Mary's little girl, who had the measles. Then she came home, and after dinner she read Mr. Jacob Riis's book, "How the Other Half Lives;" and she shuddered at the picture of the Jersey Street slums on the title page, and shuddered more as she read of the fourteen people packed in one room, and of the suffering and squalor and misery of it all. And then she made a memorandum to give a larger check to the charitable society next time. Then she went to bed, not forgetting first to read her nightly chapter in the gospel of the carpenter's son of Nazareth. And she had quite forgotten all about the coarse and unchristian words she had written in the letter that was by that time passing through the hands of the weary night-shift of mail-clerks down in the General Post-office. And when she did read it in print, she was so pleased and proud of the fluency of her own diction, and so many of her nephews and nieces said so many admiring things about what she might have done if she had only gone in for literature, that it really never occurred to her at all to think whether she had been any more just and charitable than the poor ignorant man who had annoyed her.

She was especially pleased with the part that had the legal phraseology in it, and with the scornful rebuke of the police for their unwillingness to disobey municipal ordinances. This was founded partly on something that she had heard nephew John say once, and partly on a general idea she has that the present administration has forcibly usurped the city government.

Now, I have no doubt that when the organ grinder went home at night, he and his large family laid themselves down to rest in a back room of the Jersey Street slum, and if it be so, I may sometimes see him when I look out of a certain window of the great red-brick building where my office is, for it lies on Mulberry Street, between Jersey and Houston. My own personal and private window looks out on Mulberry Street. It is in a little den at the end of a long string of low partitioned offices stretching along the Mulberry Street side; and we who tenant them have looked out of the windows for so many years that we have got to know, at least by sight, a great many of the dwellers thereabouts. We are almost in the very heart of that "mob" on whose "fellow-feeling of vulgarity" the fellows who grind the organ rely to sustain them in their outrageous behavior. And, do you know, as we look out of those windows, year after year, we find ourselves growing to have a fellow-feeling of vulgarity with that same mob.

The figure and form which we know best are those of old Judge Phœnix—for so the office-jester named him when we first moved in, and we have

known him by that name ever since. He is a fat old Irishman, with a clean-shaven face, who stands summer and winter in the side doorway that opens, next to the little grocery opposite, on the alley-way to the rear tenement. Summer and winter he is buttoned to his chin in a faded old black overcoat. Alone he stands for the most part, smoking his black pipe and teetering gently from one foot to the other. But sometimes a woman with a shawl over her head comes out of the alley-way and exchanges a few words with him before she goes to the little grocery to get a loaf of bread, or a half pint of milk, or to make that favorite purchase of the poor—three potatoes, one turnip, one carrot, four onions, and the handful of kale—a "b'ilin'." And there is also another old man, a small and bent old man, who has some strange job that occupies odd hours of the day, who stops on his way to and from work to talk with the Judge. For hours and hours they talk together, till one wonders how in the course of years they have not come to talk themselves out. What can they have left to talk about? If they had been Mezzofanti and Macaulay, talking in all known languages on all known topics, they ought certainly to have exhausted the resources of conversation long before this time.

Judge Phœnix must be a man of independent fortune, for he toils not, neither does he spin, and the lilies of the field could not lead a more simple vegetable life, nor stay more contentedly in one place. Perhaps he owns the rear tenement. I suspect so, for he must have been at one time in the

labor-contract business. This, of course, is a mere guess, founded upon the fact that we once found the Judge away from his post and at work. It was at the time they were repaving Broadway with the great pavement. We discovered the Judge at the corner of Bleecker Street perched on a pile of dirt, doing duty as sub-section boss. He was talking to the drivers of the vehicles that went past him, through the half-blockaded thoroughfare, and he was addressing them, after the true professional contractor's style, by the names of their loads.

"Hi there, sand," he would cry, "git along lively! Stone, it's you the boss wants on the other side of the street! Dhry-goods, there's no place for ye here; take the next turn!" It was a proud day for the old Judge, and I have no doubt that he talks it over still with his bent old crony, and boasts of vain deeds that grow in the telling.

Judge Phœnix is not, however, without mute company. Fair days and foul are all one to the Judge, but on fair days his companion is brought out. In front of the grocery is a box with a sloping top, on which are little bins for vegetables. In front of this box, again, on days when it is not raining or snowing, a little girl of five or six comes out of the grocery and sets a little red chair. Then she brings out a smaller girl yet, who may be two or three, a plump and puggy little thing; and down in the red chair big sister plunks little sister, and there till next meal-time little sister sits and never so much as offers to move. She must have

been trained to this unchildlike self-imprisonment, for she is lusty and strong enough. Big sister works in the shop, and once in a while she comes out and settles little sister more comfortably in her red chair; and then little sister has the sole moment of relief from a monotonous existence. She hammers on big sister's face with her fat little hands, and with such skill and force does she direct the blows that big sister often has to wipe her streaming eyes. But big sister always takes it in good part, and little sister evidently does it, not from any lack of affection, but in the way of healthy exercise. Then big sister wipes little sister's nose and goes back into the shop. I suppose there is some compact between them.

Of course there is plenty of child life all up and down the sidewalk on both sides, although little sister never joins in it. My side of the street swarms with Italian children, most of them from Jersey Street, which is really not a street, but an alley. Judge Phœnix's side is peopled with small Germans and Irish. I have noticed one peculiar thing about these children: they never change sides. They play together most amicably in the middle of the street or in the gutter, but neither ventures beyond its neutral ground.

Judge Phœnix and little sister are by far the most interesting figures to be seen from my windows, but there are many others whom we know. There is the Italian barber whose brother dropped dead while shaving a customer. You would never imagine, to see the simple and unaffected way in

which he comes out to take the air once in a while, standing on the steps of his basement, and twirling his tin-backed comb in idle thought, that he had had such a distinguished death in his family. But I don't let him shave me.

Then there is Mamie, the pretty girl in the window with the lace-curtains, and there is her epileptic brother He is insane, but harmless, and amusing, although rather trying to the nerves. He comes out of the house in a hurry, walks quickly up the street for twenty or thirty feet, then turns suddenly, as if he had forgotten something, and hurries back, to reappear two minutes later from the basement door, only to hasten wildly in another direction, turn back again, plunge into the basement door, emerge from the upper door, get half way down the block, forget it again, and go back to make a new combination of doors and exits. Sometimes he is ten or twenty minutes in the house at one time. Then we suppose he is having a fit. Now, it seems to me that that modest retirement shows consideration and thoughtfulness on his part.

In the window next to Mamie's is a little, putty-colored face, and a still smaller white face, that just peeps over the sill. One belongs to the mulatto woman's youngster. Her mother goes out scrubbing, and the little girl is alone all day. She is so much alone, that the sage-green old bachelor in the second den from mine could not stand it, last Christmas time, so he sent her a doll on the sly. That's the other face.

Then there is the grocer, who is a groceress, and the groceress's husband. I wish that man to understand, if his eye ever falls upon this page—for wrapping purposes, we will say—that, in the language of Mulberry Street, I am on to him. He has got a job recently, driving a bakery wagon, and he times his route so that he can tie up in front of his wife's grocery every day at twelve o'clock, and he puts in a solid hour of his employer's time helping his wife through the noonday rush. But he need not fear. In the interests of the higher morality I suppose I ought to go and tell his employer about it. But I won't. My morals are not that high.

Of course we have many across-the-street friends, but I cannot tell you of them all. I will only mention the plump widow who keeps the lunch-room and bakery on the Houston Street corner, where the boys go for their luncheon. It is through her that many interesting details of personal gossip find their way into this office.

Jersey Street, or at least the rear of it, seems to be given up wholly to the Italians. The most charming tenant of Jersey Street is the lovely Italian girl, who looks like a Jewess, whose mission in life seems to be to hang all day long out of her window and watch the doings in the little stone flagged courts below her. In one of these an old man sometimes comes out, sits him down in a shady corner, and plays on the Italian bagpipes, which are really more painful than any hand-organ that ever was made. After a while his wife opens

hostilities with him from her window. I suppose she is reproaching him for an idle devotion to art, but I cannot follow the conversation, although it is quite loud enough on both sides. But the handsome Italian girl up at the window follows the changes of the strife with the light of the joy of battle in her beautiful dark eyes, and I can tell from her face exactly which of the old folk is getting the better of it.

But though the life of Jersey and Mulberry Streets may be mildly interesting to outside spectators who happen to have a fellow-feeling of vulgarity with the mob, the mob must find it rather monotonous. Jersey Street is not only a blind alley, but a dead one, so far as outside life is concerned, and Judge Phœnix and little sister see pretty much the same old two-and-sixpence every day. The bustle and clamor of Mulberry Bend are only a few blocks below them, but the Bend is an exclusive slum; and Police Headquarters—the Central Office—is a block above, but the Central Office deals only with the refinements of artistic crime, and is not half so interesting as an ordinary police station. The priests go by from the school below, in their black robes and tall silk hats, always two by two, marching with brisk, business-like tread. An occasional drunken man or woman wavers along, but generally their faces and their conditions are both familiar. Sometimes two men hurry by, pressing side by side. If you have seen that peculiar walk before you know what it means. Two light steel rings link their wrists

together. The old man idly watches them until they disappear in the white marble building on the next block. And then, of course, there is always a thin stream of working folk going to and fro upon their business.

In spring and in fall things brighten up a little. These are the seasons of processions and religious festivals. Almost every day then, and sometimes half a dozen times a day, the Judge and the baby may see some Italian society parading through the street. Fourteen proud sons of Italy, clad in magnificent new uniforms, bearing aloft huge silk banners, strut magnificently in the rear of a German band of twenty-four pieces, and a drum-corps of a dozen more. Then, too, come the religious processions, when the little girls are taken to their first communion. Six sturdy Italians struggle along under the weight of a mighty temple or pavilion, all made of colored candles—not the dainty little pink trifles with rosy shades of perforated paper, that light our old lady's dining table—but the great big candles of the Romish Church (a church which, you may remember, is much affected of the mob, especially in times of suffering, sickness, or death); mighty candles, six and eight feet tall, and as thick as your wrist, of red and blue and green and yellow, arranged in artistic combinations around a statue of the Virgin. From this splendid structure silken ribbons stream in all directions, and at the end of each ribbon is a little girl—generally a pretty little girl—in a white dress bedecked with green bows.

And each little girl leads by the hand one smaller than herself, sometimes a toddler so tiny that you marvel that it can walk at all. Some of the little ones are bare-headed, but most of them wear the square head-cloth of the Italian peasant, such as their mothers and grandmothers wore in Italy. At each side of the girls marches an escort of proud parents, very much mixed up with the boys of the families, who generally appear in their usual street dress, some of them showing through it in conspicuous places. And before and behind them are bands and drum-corps, and societies with banners, and it is all a blare of martial music and primary colors the whole length of the street.

But these are Mulberry Street's brief carnival seasons, and when their splendor is departed the block relapses into workaday dulness, and the procession that marches and countermarches before Judge Phœnix and little sister in any one of the long hours between eight and twelve and one and six is something like this:

Up	Down
Detective taking prisoner to Central Office.	
Messenger boy.	Chinaman.
Two priests.	Two housepainters.
Jewish sweater, with coats on his shoulder.	Boy with basket.
Carpenter.	Boy with tin beer-pails on a stick.
Another Chinaman.	
Drunken woman (a regular).	
Glass-put-in man.	

Up	Down
Washerwoman with clothes.	
Poor woman with market-basket.	Drunken man.
Undertaker's man carrying trestles.	
Butcher's boy.	Detective coming back from Central Office alone.
Two priests.	

Such is the daily march of the mob in Mulberry Street near the mouth of Jersey's blind alley, and such is its outrageous behavior as observed by a presumably decent person from the windows of the big red-brick building across the way.

Suddenly there is an explosion of sound under the decent person's window, and a hand-organ starts off with a jerk like a freight train on a down grade, that joggles a whole string of crashing notes. Then it gets down to work, and its harsh, high-pitched, metallic drone makes the street ring for a moment. Then it is temporarily drowned by a chorus of shrill, small voices. The person—I am afraid his decency begins to drop off him here—leans on his broad window-sill and looks out. The street is filled with children of every age, size, and nationality; dirty children, clean children, well-dressed children, and children in rags, and for every one of these last two classes put together a dozen children who are neatly and cleanly but humbly clad—the children of the self-respecting poor. I do not know where they have all swarmed from. There were only three or four

in sight just before the organ came; now there are several dozen in the crowd, and the crowd is growing. See, the women are coming out in the rear tenements. Some male passers-by line up on the edge of the sidewalk and look on with a superior air. The Italian barber has come all the way up his steps, and is sitting on the rail. Judge Phœnix has teetered forward at least half a yard, and stands looking at the show over the heads of a little knot of women hooded with red plaid shawls. The epileptic boy comes out on his stoop and stays there at least three minutes before the area-way swallows him. Up above there is a head in almost every casement. Mamie is at her window, and the little mulatto child at hers. There are only two people who do not stop to look on and listen. One is a Chinaman, who stalks on with no expression at all on his blank face; the other is the boy from the printing-office with a dozen foaming cans of beer on his long stick. But he does not leave because he wants to. He lingers as long as he can, in his passage through the throng, and disappears in the printing-house doorway with his head screwed half way around on his shoulders. He would linger yet, but the big foreman would call him "Spitzbube!" and would cuff his ears.

The children are dancing. The organ is playing "On the Blue Alsatian Mountains," and the little heads are bobbing up and down to it in time as true as ever was kept. Watch the little things! They are really waltzing. There is a young one of four years old. See her little worn shoes take the step

and keep it! Dodworth or DeGarmo could not have taught her better. I wonder if either of them ever had so young a pupil. And she is dancing with a girl twice her size. Look at that ring of children—all girls—waltzing round hand in hand! How is that for a ladies' chain? Well, well, the heart grows young to see them. And now look over to the grocery. Big sister has come out and climbed on the vegetable-stand, and is sitting in the potatoes with little sister in her lap. Little sister waves her fat, red arms in the air and shrieks in babyish delight. The old women with the shawls over their heads are talking together, crooning over the spectacle in their Irish way:

"Thot's me Mary Ann, I was tellin' ye about, Mrs. Rafferty, dancin' wid the little one in the green apron."

"It's a foine sthring o' childher ye have, Mrs. Finn!" says Mrs. Rafferty, nodding her head as though it were balanced on wires. And so the dance goes on.

In the centre of it all stands the organ-grinder, swarthy and black-haired. He has a small, clear space so that he can move the one leg of his organ about, as he turns from side to side, gazing up at the windows of the brick building where the great wrought-iron griffins stare back at him from their lofty perches. His anxious black eyes rove from window to window. The poor he has always with him, but what will the folk who mould public opinion in great griffin-decorated buildings do for him?

I think we will throw him down a few nickels. Let us tear off a scrap of newspaper. Here is a bit from the society column of the *Evening* ——. That will do excellently well. We will screw the money up in that, and there it goes, *clink!* on the pavement below. There, look at that grin! Wasn't it cheap at the price?

I wish he might have had a monkey to come up and get the nickels. We shall never see the organ grinder's monkey in the streets of New York again. I see him, though. He comes out and visits me where I live among the trees, whenever the weather is not too cold to permit him to travel with his master. Sometimes he comes in a bag, on chilly days; and my own babies, who seem to be born with the fellow-feeling of vulgarity with the mob, invite him in and show him how to warm his cold little black hands in front of the kitchen range.

I do not suppose, even if it were possible to get our good old maiden lady to come down to Mulberry Street and sit at my window when the organ grinder comes along, she could ever learn to look at the mob with friendly, or at least kindly, eyes; but I think she would learn—and she is cordially invited to come—that it is not a mob that rejoices in "outrageous behavior," as some other mobs that we read of have rejoiced—notably one that gave a great deal of trouble to some very "decent people" in Paris toward the end of the last century. And I think that she even might be induced to see that the organ-grinder is following

an honest trade, pitiful as it be, and not exercising a "fearful beggary." He cannot be called a beggar who gives something that to him, and to thousands of others, is something valuable, in return for the money he asks of you. Our organ grinder is no more a beggar than is my good friend Mr. Henry Abbey, the honestest and best of operatic impresarios. Mr. Abbey can take the American opera house and hire Mr. Seidl and Mr. —— to conduct grand opera for your delight and mine, and when we can afford it we go and listen to his perfect music, and, as our poor contributions cannot pay for it all, the rich of the land meet the deficit. But this poor, footsore child of fortune has only his heavy box of tunes and a human being's easement in the public highway. Let us not shut him out of that poor right because once in a while he wanders in front of our doors and offers wares that offend our finer taste. It is easy enough to get him to betake himself elsewhere, and, if it costs us a few cents, let us not ransack our law-books and our moral philosophies to find out if we cannot indict him for constructive blackmail, but consider the nickel or the dime a little tribute to the uncounted weary souls who love his strains and welcome his coming.

For the editor of the *Evening* —— was wrong when he said that the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor consented to the licensing of the organ grinder "in the face of a popular protest." There was a protest, but it was not a popular protest, and it came face to face with a demand that

was popular. And the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen did rightly, and did as should be done in this American land of ours, when they granted the demand of the majority of the people, and refused to heed the protest of a minority. For the people who said YEA on this question were as scores of thousands or hundreds of thousands to the thousands of people who said NAY; and the vexation of the few hangs light in the balance against even the poor scrap of joy which was spared to innumerable barren lives.

And so permit me to renew my invitation to the old lady.

TIEMANN'S TO TUBBY HOOK

IF you ever were a decent, healthy boy, or if you can make believe that you once were such a boy, you must remember that you were once in love with a girl a great deal older than yourself. I am not speaking of the big school-girl with whom you thought you were in love, for one little while—just because she wouldn't look at you, and treated you like a little boy. *She* had, after all, but a tuppenny temporary superiority to you; and, after all, in the bottom of your irritated little soul, you knew it. You knew that, proud beauty that she was, she might have to lower her colors to her little sister before that young minx got into the first class and—comparatively—long dresses.

No, I am talking of the girl you loved who was not only really grown up and too old for you, but grown up almost into old-maidhood, and too old perhaps for anyone. She was not, of course, quite an old maid, but she was so nearly an old maid as to be out of all active competition with her juniors—which permitted her to be her natural, simple self, and to show you the real charm of her womanhood. Neglected by the men, not yet old enough to take to coddling young girls after the manner of motherly old maids, she found a hearty and genuine pleasure in your boyish friend-

ship, and you—you adored her. You saw, of course, as others saw, the faded dulness of her complexion; you saw the wee crow's-feet that gathered in the corners of her eyes when she laughed; you saw the faint touches of white among the crisp little curls over her temples; you saw that the keenest wind of Fall brought the red to her cheeks only in two bright spots, and that no soft Spring air would ever bring her back the rosy, pink flush of girlhood: you saw these things as others saw them—no, indeed, you did not; you saw them as others could not, and they only made her the more dear to you. And you were having one of the best and most valuable experiences of your boyhood, to which you may look back now, whatever life has brought you, with a smile that has in it nothing of regret, of derision, or of bitterness.

Suppose that this all happened long ago—that you had left a couple of quarter posts of your course of three-score-years-and-ten between that young lover and your present self; and suppose that the idea came to you to seek out and revisit this dear faded memory. And suppose that you were foolish enough to act upon the idea, and went in search of her and found her—not the wholesome, autumn-nipped comrade that you remembered, a shade or two at most frostily touched by the winter of old age—but a berouged, beraddled, bedizened old make-believe, with wrinkles plastered thick, and skinny shoulders dusted white with powder—ah, me, how you would wish you had not gone!

And just so I wished that I had not gone, when,

the other day, I was tempted back to revisit the best beloved of all the homes of my nomadic boyhood.

I remembered four pleasant years of early youth when my lot was cast in a region that was singularly delightful and grateful and lovable, although the finger of death had already touched its prosperity and beauty beyond all requickening.

It was a fair countryside of upland and plateau, lying between a majestic hill-bordered river and an idle, wandering, marshy, salt creek that flowed almost side by side with its nobler companion for several miles before they came together at the base of a steep, rocky height, crowned with thick woods. This whole country was my playground, a strip some four or five miles long, and for the most of the way a mile wide between the two rivers, with the rocky, wooded eminence for its northern boundary.

In the days when the broad road that led from the great city was a famous highway, it had run through a country of comfortable farm-houses and substantial old-fashioned mansions standing in spacious grounds of woodland and meadow. These latter occupied the heights along the great river, like a lofty breastwork of aristocracy, guarding the humbler tillers of the soil in the more sheltered plains and hollows behind them. The extreme north of my playground had been, within my father's easy remembering, a woodland wild enough to shelter deer; and even in my boyhood there remained patches of forest where once in a

while the sharp-eyed picked up gunflints and brass buttons that had been dropped among those very trees by the marauding soldiery of King George III. of tyrannical memory. There was no deer there when I was a boy. Deer go naturally with a hardy peasantry, and not naturally, perhaps, but artificially, with the rich and great. But deer cannot coexist with a population composed of what we call "People of Moderate Means." It is not in the eternal fitness of things that they should.

For, as I first knew our neighborhood, it was a suburb as a physical fact only. As a body politic, we were a part of the great city, and those twain demons of encroachment, Taxes and Assessments, had definitively won in their battle with both the farmers and the country-house gentry. To the south, the farms had been wholly routed out of existence. A few of the old family estates were kept up after a fashion, but it was only as the officers of a defeated garrison are allowed to take their own time about leaving their quarters. Along the broad highway some of them lingered, keeping up a poor pretence of disregarding new grades and levels, and of not seeing the little shanties that squatted under their very windows, or the more offensive habitations of a more pretentious poverty that began to range themselves here and there in serried blocks.

Poor people of moderate means! Nobody wants you, except the real estate speculator, and he wants you only to empty your light pockets for you, and to leave you to die of cheap plumbing in

the poor little sham of a house that he builds to suit your moderate means and his immoderate greed. Nowhere are you welcome, except where contractors are digging new roads and blasting rocks and filling sunken lots with ashes and tin cans. The random goat of poverty browses on the very confines of the scanty, small settlement of cheap gentility where you and your neighbors—people of moderate means like yourself—huddle together in your endless, unceasing struggle for a home and self-respect. You know that your smug, mean little house, tricked out with machine-made scroll-work, and insufficiently clad in two coats of ready-mixed paint, is an eyesore to the poor old gentleman who has sold you a corner of his father's estate to build it on. But there it is—the whole hard business of life for the poor—for the big poor and the little poor, and the unhappiest of all, the moderately poor. *He* must sell strip after strip of the grounds his father laid out with such loving and far-looking pride. *You* must buy your narrow strip from him, and raise thereon your tawdry little house, calculating the cost of every inch of construction in hungry anxiety of mind. And then you must sit down in your narrow front room to stare at the squalid shanty of the poor man who has squatted right in your sight, on the land condemned for the new avenue; to wish that the street might be cut through and the unsightly hovel taken away—and then to groan in spirit as you think of the assessment you must pay when the street *is* cut through.

And yet you must live, oh, people of moderate means! You have your loves and your cares, your tastes and your ambitions, your hopes and your fears, your griefs and your joys, just like the people whom you envy and the people who envy you. As much as any of them, you have the capacity for pain and for pleasure, for loving and for being loved, that gives human beings a right to turn the leaves of the book of life and spell out its lessons for themselves. I know this; I know it well; I was beginning to find it out when I first came to that outpost suburb of New York, in the trail of your weary army.

But I was a boy then, and no moderateness of earthly means could rob me of my inheritance in the sky and the woods and the fields, in the sun and the snow and the rain and the wind, and in every day's weather, of which there never was any kind made that has not some delight in it to a healthful body and heart. And on this inheritance I drew such great, big, liberal, whacking drafts that, I declare, to this very day, some odd silver pieces of the resultant spending-money keep turning up, now and then, in forgotten pockets of my mind.

The field of my boyish activity was practically limited by the existing conditions of the city's growth. With each year there was less and less temptation to extend that field southward. The Bloomingdale Road, with its great arching willows, its hospitable old road-houses withdrawn from the street and hidden far down shady lanes that led riverward—the splendid old highway

retained something of its charm; but day by day the gridiron system of streets encroached upon it, and day by day the shanties and cheap villas crowded in along its sides, between the old farmsteads and the country-places. And then it led only to the raw and unfinished Central Park, and to the bare waste and dreary fag-end of a New York that still looked upon Union Square as an uptown quarter. Besides that, the lone scion of respectability who wandered too freely about the region just below Manhattanville, was apt to get his head most beautifully punched at the hands of some predatory gang of embryonic toughs from the shanties on the line of the aqueduct.

That is how our range—mine and the other boys'—was from Tiemann's to Tubby Hook; that is, from where ex-Mayor Tiemann's fine old house, with its long conservatories, sat on the edge of the Manhattanville bluff and looked down into the black mouths of the chimneys of the paint-works that had paid for its building, up to the little inn near the junction of Spuyten Duyvil Creek and the Hudson River. Occasionally, of course, the delight of the river front tempted us further down. There was an iron-mill down there (if that is the proper name for a place where they make pig iron), whose operations were a perpetual joy to boyhood's heart. The benevolent lovers of the picturesque who owned this mill had a most entrancing way of making their castings late in the afternoon, so as to give a boy a chance to coast or skate, an hour after school closed, before it was

time to slip down to the grimy building on the river's bank, and peer through the arched doorway into the great, dark, mysterious cavern with its floor of sand marked out in a pattern of trenches that looked as if they had been made by some gigantic double-toothed comb—a sort of right-angled herringbone pattern. The darkness gathered outside, and deepened still faster within that gloomy, smoke-blackened hollow. The workmen, with long iron rods in their hands, moved about with the cautious, expectant manner of men whose duty brings them in contact with a daily danger. They stepped carefully about, fearful of injuring the regular impressions in the smooth sand, and their looks turned ever with a certain anxiety to the great black furnace at the northern end of the room, where every now and then, at the foreman's order, a fiery eye would open itself for inspection and close sullenly, making everything seem more dark than it was before. At last—sometimes it was long to wait—the eye would open, and the foreman, looking into it, would nod; and then a thrill of excitement ran through the workmen at their stations and the boys in the big doorway; and suddenly a huge red mouth opened beneath the eye, and out poured the mighty flood of molten iron, glowing with a terrible, wonderful, dazzling color that was neither white nor red, nor rose nor yellow, but that seemed to partake of them all, and yet to be strangely different from any hue that men can classify or name. Down it flowed upon the sanded floor, first into the broad

trench in front of the furnace, then down the long dorsals of the rectangular herring-bones, spreading out as it went into the depressions to right and left, until the mighty pattern of fire shone in its full length and breadth on the floor of sand; and the workmen, who had been coaxing the sluggish, lava-like flood along with their iron rods, rested from their labors and wiped their hot brows, while a thin cloud of steamy vapor floated up to the begrimed rafters. Standing in the doorway we could watch the familiar pattern—the sow and pigs, it was called—die down to a dull rose red, and then we would hurry away before blackness came upon it and wiped it clean out of memory and imagination.

Below the foundry, too, there was a point of land whereon were certain elevations and depressions of turf-covered earth that were by many, and most certainly by me, supposed to be the ruins of a Revolutionary fort. I have heard long and warm discussions of the nature and history of these mounds and trenches, and I believe the weight of authority was against the theory that they were earthworks thrown up to oppose the passage of a British fleet. But they were good enough earthworks for a boy.

Just above Tiemann's, on the lofty, protrudent corner made by the dropping of the highroad into the curious transverse valley, or swale, which at 125th Street crosses Manhattan Island from east to west, stood, at the top of a steep lawn, a mansion imposing still in spite of age, decay, and sorry days. The great Ionic columns of the portico,

which stood the whole height and breadth of the front, were cracked in their length, and rotten in base and capital. The white and yellow paint was faded and blistered. Below the broad flight of crazy front-steps the grass grew rank in the gravel walk, and died out in brown, withered patches on the lawn, where only plantain and sorrel throve. It was a sad and shabby old house enough, but even the patches of newspaper here and there on its broken window-panes could not take away a certain simple, old-fashioned dignity from its weather-beaten face.

Here, the boys used to say, the Crazy Woman lived; but she was not crazy. I knew the old lady well, and at one time we were very good friends. She was the last daughter of an old, once prosperous family; a woman of bright, even brilliant mind, unhinged by misfortune, disappointment, loneliness, and the horrible fascination which an inherited load of litigation exercised upon her. The one diversion of her declining years was to let various parts and portions of her premises, on any ridiculous terms that might suggest themselves, to any tenants that might offer; and then to eject the lessee, either on a nice point of law or on general principles, precisely as she saw fit. She was almost invariably successful in this curious game, and when she was not, she promptly made friends with her victorious tenant, and he usually ended by liking her very much.

Her family, if I remember rightly, had distinguished itself in public service. It was one of

those good old American houses where the men-children are born with politics in their veins—that is, with an inherited sense of citizenship, and a conscious pride in bearing their share in the civic burden. The young man just out of college, who has got a job at writing editorials on the Purification of Politics, is very fond of alluding to such men as "indurated professional office-holders." But the good old gentleman who pays the young ex-collegian's bills sometimes takes a great deal of pleasure—in his stupid, old-fashioned way—in uniting with his fellow-merchants of the Swamp or Hanover Square, to subscribe to a testimonial to some one of the best abused of these "indurated" sinners, in honor of his distinguished services in lowering some tax-rate, in suppressing some nuisance, in establishing some new municipal safeguard to life or property. This blood in her may, in some measure, account for the vigor and enthusiasm with which this old lady expressed her sense of the loss the community had sustained in the death of President Lincoln, in April of 1865.

Summoning two or three of us youngsters, and a dazed Irish maid fresh from Castle Garden and a three weeks' voyage in the steerage of an ocean steamer, she led us up to the top of the house, to one of those vast old-time garrets that might have been—and in country inns occasionally were—turned into ball-rooms, with the aid of a few lights and sconces. Here was stored the accumulated garmenture of the household for generation upon generation; and as far as I could discover, every

member of that family had been born into a profound mourning that had continued unto his or her latest day, unmitigated save for white shirts and petticoats. These we bore down by great armfuls to the front portico, and I remember that the operation took nearly an hour. When at length we had covered the shaky warped floor of the long porch with the strange heaps of black and white—linens, cottons, silks, bombazines, alpacas, ginghams, every conceivable fabric, in fashion or out of fashion that could be bleached white or dyed black—the old lady arranged us in working order, and, acting at once as directress and chief worker, with incredible quickness and dexterity she rent these varied and multiform pieces of raiment into broad strips, which she ingeniously twisted, two or three together, stitching them at the ends to other sets of strips, until she had formed immensely long rolls of black and white. Mounting a tall ladder, with the help of the strongest and oldest of her assistants, she wound the great tall white columns with these strips, fastening them in huge spirals from top to bottom, black and white entwined. Then she hung ample festoons between the pillars, and contrived something painfully ambitious in the way of rosettes for the cornice and frieze.

Then we all went out in the street and gazed at the work of our hands. The rosettes were a failure, and the old lady admitted it. I have forgotten whether she said they looked "mangy," or "measly," or "peaky;" but she conveyed her idea in some such graphic phrase. But I must ask you

to believe me when I tell you that, from the distant street, that poor, weather-worn old front seemed to have taken on the very grandeur of mourning, with its great, clean, strong columns simply wreathed in black and snowy white, that sparkled a little here and there in the fitful, cold, spring sunlight. Of course, when you drew near to it, it resolved itself into a bewildering and somewhat indecent confusion of black petticoats, and starched shirts, and drawers, and skirts, and baby-clothes, and chemises, and dickies, and neck-cloths, and handkerchiefs, all twisted up into the most fantastic trappings of woe that ever decked a genuine and patriotic grief. But I am glad, for myself, that I can look at it all now from even a greater distance than the highway at the foot of the lawn.

I must admit that, even in my day, the shops and houses of the Moderate Means colony had so fringed the broad highway with their trivial, commonplace, weakly pretentious architecture, that very little of the distinctive character of the old road was left. Certainly, from Tiemann's to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum—about two miles of straight road—there was little that had any saving grace of honorable age, except here and there where some pioneer shanty had squatted itself long enough to have acquired a pleasant look of faded shabbiness. The tavern and the stage-office, it is true, kept enough of their old appearance to make a link between those days and the days when swarms of red-faced drovers, with big woollen comfortables about their big necks, and with fat,

greasy, leather wallets stuffed full of bank-notes, gathered noisily there, as it was their wont to gather at all the "Bull's Head Taverns" in and around New York. The omnibuses that crawled out from New York were comparatively modern—that is, a Broadway 'bus rarely got ten or fifteen years beyond the period of positive decrepitude without being shifted to the Washington Heights line. But under the big shed around the corner still stood the great old George Washington coach—a structure about the size and shape of a small canal-boat, with the most beautiful patriotic pictures all over it, of which I only remember Lord Cornwallis surrendering his sword in the politest and most theatrical manner imaginable, although the poignancy of his feelings had apparently turned his scarlet uniform to a pale orange. This magnificent equipage was a trifle rheumaticky about its underpinning, but, drawn by four, six, or eight horses, it still took the road on holidays; and in winter, when the sleighing was unusually fine, with its wheels transformed into sectional runners like a gigantic bob-sled, it swept majestically out upon the road, where it towered above the flock of flying cutters whose bells set the air a-jingle from Bloomingdale to King's Bridge.

But if the beauty of Broadway as a country highroad had been marred by its adaptation to the exigencies of a suburb of moderate means, we boys felt the deprivation but little. To right and to left, as we wandered northward, five minutes' walk would take us into a country of green lanes and

meadows and marshland and woodland; where houses and streets were as yet too few to frighten away that kindly old Dame Nature who was always so glad to see us. If you turned to the right—to the east, that is—you found the laurel-bordered fields where we played baseball—I don't mean that the fields sprouted with laurels for us boys in those old days of 29 to 34 scores, but that the *Kalmia latifolia* crowned the gray rocks that cropped out all around. Farther up was the wonderful and mysterious old house of Madame Jumel—Aaron Burr's Madame Jumel—set apart from all other houses by its associations with the fierce, vindictive passions of that strange old woman, whom, it seems to me, I can still vaguely remember, seated very stiff and upright in her great old family carriage. At the foot of the heights, on this side, the Harlem River flowed between its marshy margins to join Spuyten Duyvil Creek—the Harlem with its floats and boats and bridges and ramshackle docks, and all the countless delights of a boating river. Here also was a certain dell, half-way up the heights overlooking McComb's Dam Bridge, where countless violets grew around a little spring, and where there was a real cave, in which, if real pirates had not left their treasure, at least real tramps had slept and left a real smell. And on top of the cave there was a stone which was supposed to retain the footprint of a prehistoric Indian. From what I remember of that footprint I am inclined to think that it must have been made by the foot of a derrick, and not by that of an Indian.

But it was on the other side of the Island, between the Deaf and Dumb Asylum and Tubby Hook, and between the Ridge and the River, that I most loved to ramble. Here was the slope of a woodland height running down to a broad low strip, whose westernmost boundary was the railroad embankment, beyond which lay the broad blue Hudson, with Fort Lee and the first up-springing of the Palisades, to be seen by glimpses through the tree-trunks. This was, I think, the prettiest piece of flower-spangled wildwood that I have ever seen. For centuries it had drained the richness of that long and lofty ridge. The life of lawns and gardens had gone into it; the dark wood-soil had been washed from out the rocks on the brow of the hill; and down below there, where a vagrom brooklet chirped its way between green stones, the wholesome soil bloomed forth in grateful luxuriance. From the first coming of the anemone and the hepatica, to the time of the asters, there was always something growing there to delight the scent or the sight; and most of all do I remember the huge clumps of Dutchman's-breeches—the purple and the waxy white as well as the honey-tipped scarlet.

There were little sunlit clearings here, and I well recall the day when, looking across one of these, I saw something that stood awkwardly and conspicuously out of the young wood-grass—a raw stake of pine wood, and beyond that, another stake, and another; and parallel with these another row, marking out two straight lines, until the bushes hid

them. The surveyors had begun to lay out the line of the new Boulevard, on which you may now roll in your carriage to Inwood, through the wreck of the woods where I used to scramble over rock and tree-trunk, going toward Tubby Hook.

It was on the grayest of gray November days last year that I had the unhappy thought of revisiting this love of my youth. I followed familiar trails, guided by landmarks I could not forget —although they had somehow grown incredibly poor and mean and shabby, and had entirely lost a certain dignity that they had until then kept quite clearly in my remembrance. And behold, they were no longer landmarks except to me. A change had come over the face of this old playground of mine. It had forgotten the withered, modest grace of the time when it was middle-aged, and when I was a boy. It was checkered and grid-ironed with pavements and electric lights. The Elevated Railroad roared at its doors behind clouds of smoke and steam. Great, cheerless, hideously ornate flat buildings reared their zinc-tipped fronts toward the gray heaven, to show the highest aspirations of that demoralized suburb in the way of domestic architecture. To right, to left, every way I turned, I saw a cheap, tawdry, slipshod imitation of the real city—or perhaps I should say, of all that is ugliest and vulgarest, least desirable, and least calculated to endure, in the troubled face of city life. I was glad to get away; glad that the gray mist that rolled up from the Hudson River hid from my sight within its

fleecy bosom some details of that vulgar and pitiful degradation. One place alone I found as I had hoped to find it. Ex-Mayor Tiemann's house was gone, his conservatory was a crumbling ruin; the house we decked for Lincoln's death was a filthy tenement with a tumble-down gallery where the old portico had stood, and I found very little on my upward pilgrimage that had not experienced some change—for the worse, as it seemed to me. The very cemetery that belongs to old Trinity had dandified itself with a wonderful wall and a still more wonderful bridge to its annex—or appendix, or extension, or whatever you call it. But just above it is a little enclosure that is called a park—a place where a few people of modest, old-fashioned, domestic tastes had built their houses together to join in a common resistance against the encroachments of the speculator and the nomad house-hunter. I found this little settlement undisturbed, uninvaded, save by a sort of gentle decay that did it no ill-service, in my eyes. The pale dust was a little deeper in the roadways that had once been paved with limestone, a few more brown autumn leaves had fallen in the corners of the fences, the clustered wooden houses all looked a little more rustily respectable in their reserved and sleepy silence—a little bit more, I thought, as if they sheltered a colony of old maids. Otherwise it looked pretty much as it did when I first saw it, well nigh thirty years ago.

To see if there were anything alive in that misty, dusty, faded little abode of respectability, I rang

at the door of one house, and found some inquiries to make concerning another one that seemed to be untenanted.

It was a very pretty young lady who opened the door for me, with such shining dark eyes and with so bright a red in her cheeks, that you felt that she could not have been long in that dull, old-time spot, where life seemed to be all one neutral color. She answered my questions kindly, and then, with something in her manner which told me that strangers did not often wander in there, she said that it was a very nice place to live in. I told her that I knew it *had* been a very nice place to live in.

THE BOWERY AND BOHEMIA

ONE day a good many years ago an old gentleman from Rondout-on-the-Hudson—then plain Rondout—was walking up Broadway seeing the sights. He had not been in New York in ten or twelve years, and although he was an old gentleman who always had a cask of good ale in his cellar in the winter-time, yet he had never tasted the strange German beverage called lager-beer, which he had heard and read about. So when he saw its name on a sign he went in and drank a mug, sipping it slowly and thoughtfully, as he would have sipped his old ale. He found it refreshing—peculiar—and, well, on the whole, very refreshing indeed, as he considerately told the proprietor.

But what interested him more than the beer was the sight of a group of young men seated around a table drinking beer, reading—and—yes, actually writing verses, and bandying very lively jests among themselves. The old gentleman could not help hearing their conversation, and when he went out into the street he shook his head thoughtfully.

"I wonder what my father would have said to that?" he reflected. "Young gentlemen sitting in a pot-house at high noon and turning verses like so many ballad-mongers! Well, well, well, if

those are the ways of lager-beer drinkers, I'll stick to my good old ale!"

And greatly surprised would that honest old gentleman have been to know that the presence of that little group of poets and humorists attracted as much custom to good Mr. Pfaff's beer-saloon as did his fresh, cool lager; and that young men, and, for the matter of that, men not so young, stole in there to listen to their contests of wit, and to wish and yearn and aspire to be of their goodly company. For the old gentleman little dreamed, as he went on his course up Broadway, that he had seen the first Bohemians of New York, and that these young men would be written about and talked about and versified about for generations to come. Unconscious of this honor he went on to Fourteenth Street to see the new square they were laying out there.

Perhaps nothing better marks the place where the city of New York got clean and clear out of provincial pettiness into metropolitan tolerance than the advent of the Bohemians. Twenty-five years earlier they would have been a scandal and a reproach to the town. Not for their literature, or for their wit, or for their hard drinking, or even for their poverty; but for their brotherhood, and for their calm indifference to all the rest of the world whom they did not care to receive into their kingdom of Bohemia. There is human nature in this; more human nature than there is in most provincialism. Take a community of one hundred people and let any ten of its members

join themselves together and dictate the terms on which an eleventh may be admitted to their band. The whole remaining eighty-nine will quarrel for the twelfth place. But take a community of a thousand, and let ten such internal groups be formed, and every group will have to canvass more or less hard to increase its number. For the other nine hundred people, being able to pick and choose, are likely to feel a deep indifference to the question of joining any segregation at all. If group No. 2 says, "Come into my crowd, I understand they don't want you in No. 1," the individual replies: "What the deuce do I care about No. 1 or you either? Here are Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7 all begging for me. If you and No. 1 keep on in your conceit you'll find yourselves left out in the cold."

And as it frequently happens to turn out that way, the dweller in a great city soon learns, in the first place, that he is less important than he thought he was; in the second place, that he is less unimportant than some people would like to have him think himself. All of which goes to show that when New Yorkers looked with easy tolerance, and some of them with open admiration, upon the Bohemians at Pfaff's saloon, they had come to be citizens of no mean city, and were making metropolitan growth.

A Bohemian may be defined as the only kind of gentleman permanently in temporary difficulties who is neither a sponge nor a cheat. He is a type that has existed in all ages and always will exist. He is a man who lacks certain elements necessary

to success in this world, and who manages to keep fairly even with the world, by dint of ingenious shift and expedient; never fully succeeding, never wholly failing. He is a man, in fact, who can't swim; but can tread water. But he never, never, never calls himself a Bohemian—at least, in a somewhat wide experience, I have known only two that ever did, and one of these was a baronet. As a rule, if you overhear a man approach his acquaintance with the formula, "As one Bohemian to another," you may make up your mind that that man means an assault upon the other man's pocket-book, and that if the assault is successful the damages will never be repaired. That man is not a Bohemian; he is a beat. Your true Bohemian always calls himself by some euphemistic name. He is always a gentleman at odds with fortune, who rolled in wealth yesterday and will tomorrow, but who at present is willing to do any work that he is sure will make him immortal, and that he thinks may get him the price of a supper. And very often he lends more largely than he borrows.

Now the crowd which the old gentleman saw in the saloon—and he saw George Arnold, Fitz-James O'Brien, and perhaps N. P. Shepard—was a crowd of Bohemians rather by its own christening than by any ordinary application of the word. They were all young men of ability, recognized in their profession. Of those who have died, two at least have honor and literary consideration today; of those who lived, some have obtained celeb-

rity, and all a reasonable measure of success. Mürger's Bohemians would have called them Philistines. But they have started a tradition that will survive from generation unto generation; a tradition of delusion so long as the glamor of poetry, romance, and adventure hang around the mysteriously attractive personality of a Bohemian. Ever since then New York has had, and always will have, the posing Bohemian and his worshippers.

Ten or fifteen years ago the "French Quarter" got its literary introduction to New York, and the fact was revealed that it was the resort of real Bohemians—young men who actually lived by their wit and their wits, and who talked brilliantly over fifty-cent table-d'hôte dinners. This was the signal for the would-be Bohemian to emerge from his dainty flat or his oak-panelled studio in Washington Square, hasten down to Bleecker or Houston Street, there to eat chicken badly *braisé,* fried chuck-steak, and soggy spaghetti, and to drink thin blue wine and chicory-coffee that he might listen to the feast of witticism and flow of soul that he expected to find at the next table. If he found it at all, he lost it at once. If he made the acquaintance of the young men at the next table, he found them to be young men of his own sort—agreeable young boys just from Columbia and Harvard, who were painting impressionless pictures for the love of Art for Art's sake, and living very comfortably on their paternal allowances. Any one of the crowd would think the world was

coming to pieces if he woke up in the morning to wonder where he could get his breakfast on credit, and wonder where he could earn enough money to buy his dinner. Yet these innocent youngsters continue to pervade "The Quarter," as they call it; and as time goes on, by much drinking of ponies of brandy and smoking of cigarettes, they get to fancy that they themselves are Bohemians. And when they get tired of it all and want something good to eat, they go up to Delmonico's and get it.

And their Bohemian predecessors, who sought the French fifty-cent restaurants as *their* highest attainable luxury—what has become of them? They have fled before that incursion as a flock of birds before a whirlwind. They leave behind them, perhaps, a few of the more mean-spirited among them, who are willing to degenerate into fawners on the rich, and habitual borrowers of trifling sums. But the true Bohemians, the men who have the real blood in their veins, they must seek some other meeting-place where they can pitch their never-abiding tents, and sit at their humble feasts to recount to each other, amid appreciative laughter, the tricks and devices and pitiful petty schemes for the gaining of daily bread that make up for them the game and comedy of life. Tell me not that Ishmael does not enjoy the wilderness. The Lord made him for it, and he would not be happy anywhere else.

There was one such child of fortune once, who brought his blue eyes over from Ireland. His

harmless and gentle life closed after too many years of direst misfortune. But as long as he wandered in the depths of poverty there was one strange and mysterious thing about him. His clothes, always well brushed and well carried on a gallant form, often showed cruel signs of wear, especially when he went for a winter without an overcoat. But shabby as his garments might grow, empty as his pockets might be, his linen was always spotless, stiff, and fresh. Now everybody who has ever had occasion to consider the matter knows that by the aid of a pair of scissors the life of a collar or of a pair of cuffs can be prolonged almost indefinitely—apparent miracles had been performed in this way. But no pair of scissors will pay a laundry bill; and finally a committee of the curious waited upon this student of economics and asked him to say how he did it. He was proud and delighted to tell them.

"I-I-I'll tell ye, boys," he said, in his pleasant Dublin brogue, "but 'twas I that thought it out. I wash them, of course, in the basin—that's easy enough; but you'd think I'd be put to it to iron them, wouldn't ye, now? Well, I've invinted a substischoot for ironing—it's me big books. Through all me vicissichoods, boys, I kept me Bible and me dictionary, and I lay the collars and cuffs in the undher one and get the leg of the bureau on top of them both—and you'd be surprised at the artistic effect."

There is no class in society where the sponge, the toady, the man who is willing to receive

socially without giving in return, is more quickly found out or more heartily disowned than among the genuine Bohemians. He is to them a traitor, he is one who plays the game unfairly, one who is willing to fill his belly by means to which they will not resort, lax and fantastic as is their social code. Do you know, for instance, what "Jackaling" is in New York? A Jackal is a man generally of good address, and capable of a display of good fellowship combined with much knowledge of literature and art, and a vast and intimate acquaintance with writers, musicians, and managers. He makes it his business to haunt hotels, theatrical agencies, and managers' offices, and to know whenever, in his language, "a new jay comes to town." The jay he is after is some man generally from the smaller provincial cities, who has artistic or theatrical aspirations and a pocketful of money. It is the Jackal's mission to turn this jay into an "angel." Has the gentleman from Lockport come with the score of a comic opera under his arm, and two thousand dollars in his pocket? Two thousand dollars will not go far toward the production of a comic opera in these days, and the jay finds that out later; but not until after the Jackal has made him intimately acquainted with a very gentlemanly and experienced manager who thinks that it can be done for that price with strict economy. Has the young man of pronounced theatrical talent arrived from Keokuk with gold and a thirst for fame? The Jackal knows just the dramatist who will write him the play that he

ought to star in. Does the wealthy and important person from Podunk desire to back something absolutely safe and sure in the line of theatrical speculation? The Jackal has the very thing for which he is looking. And in all these, and in all similar contingencies, it is a poor Jackal who does not get his commission at both ends.

The Jackal may do all these things, but he may not, if he is treated, fail to treat in return. I do not mean to say at all that Jackaling is a business highly esteemed, even in darkest Bohemia, but it is considered legitimate, and I hope that no gentleman doing business in Wall Street, or on the Consolidated Exchange, will feel too deeply grieved when he learns the fact.

But where have the real Bohemians fled to from the presence of the too-well-disposed and too-wealthy children of the Benedick and the Holbein? Not where they are likely to find him, you may be sure. The true Bohemian does not carry his true address on his card. In fact, he is delicate to the point of sensitiveness about allowing any publicity to attach to his address. He communicates it confidentially to those with whom he has business dealings, but he carefully conceals it from the prying world. As soon as the world knows it he moves. I once asked a chief of the Bohemian tribe whose residence was the world, but whose temporary address was sometimes Paris, why he had moved from the Quartier Latin to a place in Montmartre.

"Had to, my dear fellow," he answered, with

dignity; "why if you live over on that side of the river they'll call you a *Bohemian!*"

In Paris the home of wit in poverty has been moved across the Seine to the south side of the hill up which people climb to make pilgrimages to the Moulin Rouge and the church of St. Pierre de Montmartre. In New York it has been moved not only across that river of human intercourse that we call Broadway—a river with a tidal ebb and flow of travel and traffic—but across a wilder, stranger, and more turbulent flood called the Bowery, to a region of which the well-fed and prosperous New Yorker knows very, very little.

As more foreigners walk on the Bowery than walk on any other street in New York; and as more different nationalities are represented there than are represented in any other street in New York; and as the foreigners all say that the Bowery is the most marvellous thoroughfare in the world, I think we are justified in assuming that there is little reason to doubt that the foreigners are entirely right in the matter, especially as their opinion coincides with that of every American who has ever made even a casual attempt to size up the Bowery.

No one man can thoroughly know a great city. People say that Dickens knew London, but I am sure that Dickens would never have said it. He knew enough of London to know that no one human mind, no one mortal life can take in the complex intensity of a metropolis. Try to count a million, and then try to form a conception of the

impossibility of learning all the ins and outs of the domicile of a million men, women, and children. I have met men who thought they knew New York, but I have never met a man—except a man from a remote rural district—who thought he knew the Bowery. There are agriculturists, however, all over this broad land who have entertained that supposition and acted on it—but never twice. The sense of humor is the saving grace of the American people.

I first made acquaintance with the Bowery as a boy through some lithographic prints. I was interested in them, for I was looking forward to learning to shoot, and my father had told me that there used to be pretty good shooting at the upper end of the Bowery, though, of course, not so good as there was farther up near the Block House, or in the wood beyond. Besides, the pictures showed a very pretty country road with big trees on both sides of it, and comfortable farmhouses, and, I suppose, an inn with a swinging sign. I was disappointed at first, when I heard it had been all built up, but I was consoled when the glories of the real Bowery were unfolded to my youthful mind, and I heard of the butcher-boy and his red sleigh; of the Bowery Theatre and peanut gallery, and the gods, and Mr. Eddy, and the war-cry they made of his name—and a glorious old war-cry it is, better than any college cries ever invented: "*Hi,* Eddy-eddy-eddy-eddy-eddy-eddy-eddy-eddy-eddy!" of Mose and his silk locks; of the fire-engine fights, and Big Six, and "Wash-her-down!" of the pump

at Houston Street; of what happened to Mr. Thackeray when he talked to the tough; of many other delightful things that made the Bowery, to my young imagination, one long avenue of romance, mystery, and thrilling adventure. And the first time I went in the flesh to the Bowery was to go with an elderly lady to an optician's shop.

"And is this—Yarrow?—*This* the stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!"

But the study of the Bowery that I began that day has gone on with interruption for a good many years, and I think now that I am arriving at the point where I have some faint glimmerings of the littleness of my knowledge of it as compared with what there is to be known. I do not mean to say that I can begin to size the disproportion up with any accuracy, but I think I have accomplished a good deal in getting as far as I have.

The Bowery is not a large place, for I think that, properly speaking, it is a place rather than a street or avenue. It is an irregularly shaped ellipse, of notable width in its widest part. It begins at Chatham Square, which lies on the parallel of the sixth Broadway block above City Hall, and loses its identity at the Cooper Union where Third and Fourth Avenues begin, so that it is a scant

mile in all. But it is the alivest mile on the face of the earth. And it either bounds or bisects that square mile that the statisticians say is the most densely populated square mile on the face of the globe. This is the heart of the New York tenement district. As the Bowery is the Broadway of the East Side, the street of its pleasures, it would be interesting enough if it opened up only this one densely populated district. But there is much more to contribute to its infinite variety. It serves the same purpose for the Chinese colony in Mott, Pell, and Doyers Streets, and for the Italian swarms in Mulberry Bend, the most picturesque and interesting slum I have ever seen, and I am an ardent collector of slums. I have missed art galleries and palaces and theatres and cathedrals (cathedrals particularly) in various and sundry cities, but I don't think I ever missed a slum. Mulberry Bend is a narrow bend in Mulberry Street, a tortuous ravine of all tenement houses, and it is so full of people that the throngs going and coming spread off the sidewalk nearly to the middle of the street. There they leave a little lane for the babies to play in. No, they never get run over. There is a perfect understanding between the babies and the peddlers who drive their wagons in Mulberry Bend. The crowds are in the street partly because much of the sidewalk and all of the gutter is taken up with venders' stands, which give its characteristic feature to Mulberry Bend. There are displayed more and stranger wares than uptown people ever heard of.

Probably the edibles are in the majority, certainly they are the queerest part of the show. There are trays and bins there in the Bend, containing dozens and dozens of things that you would never guess were meant to eat if you didn't happen to see a ham or a string of sausages or some other familiar object among them. But the color of the Bend—and its color is its strong point—comes from its display of wearing apparel and candy. A lady can go out in Mulberry Bend and purchase every article of apparel, external or private and personal, that she ever heard of, and some that she never heard of, and she can get them of any shade or hue. If she likes what they call "Liberty" colors—soft, neutral tones—she can get them from the second-hand dealers whose goods have all the softest of shades that age and exposure can give them. But if she likes, as I do, bright, cheerful colors, she can get tints in Mulberry Bend that you could warm your hands on. Reds, greens, and yellows preponderate, and Nature herself would own that the Italians could give her points on inventing green and not exert themselves to do it. The pure arsenical tones are preferred in the Bend, and, by the bye, anybody who remembers the days when ladies wore magenta and solferino, and wants to have those dear old colors set his teeth on edge again, can go to the Bend and find them there. The same dye-stuffs that are popular in the dress-goods are equally popular in the candy, and candy is a chief product of Mulberry Bend. It is piled

up in reckless profusion on scores of stands, here, there, and everywhere, and to call the general effect festal, would be to speak slightingly of it. The stranger who enters Mulberry Bend and sees the dress-goods and the candies is sure to think that the place has been decorated to receive him. No, nobody will hurt you if you go down there and are polite, and mind your own business, and do not step on the babies. But if you stare about and make comments, I think those people will be justified in suspecting that the people uptown don't always know how to behave themselves like ladies and gentlemen, so do not bring disgrace on your neighborhood, and do not go in a cab. You will not bother the babies, but you will find it trying to your own nerves.

There is a good deal of money in Mulberry Street, and some of it overflows into the Bowery. From this street also the Baxter Street variety of Jews find their way into the Bowery. These are the Jew toughs, and there is no other type of Jew at all like them in all New York's assortment of Hebrew types, which cannot be called meagre. Of the Jewish types New York has, as the printers say, "a full case."

But it is on the other side of the Bowery that there lies a world to which the world north of Fourteenth Street is a select family party. I could not give even a partial list of its elements. Here dwell the Polish Jews with their back-yards full of chickens. The police raid those back-yards with ready assiduity, but the yards are always

promptly replenished. It is the police against a religion, and the odds are against the police. The Jew will die for it, if needs be, but his chickens must be killed *kosher* way and not Christian way, but that is only the way of the Jews: the Hungarians, the Bohemians, the Anarchist Russians, the Scandinavians of all sorts who come up from the wharfs, the Irish, who are there, as everywhere, the Portuguese Jews, and all the rest of them who help to form that city within a city—have they not, all of them, ways of their own? I speak of this Babylon only to say that here and there on its borders, and, once in a way, in its very heart, are rows or blocks of plain brick houses, homely, decent, respectable relics of the days when the sturdy, steady tradesfolk of New York built here the homes that they hoped to leave to their children. They are boarding- and lodging-houses now, poor enough, but proud in their respectability of the past, although the tide of ignorance, poverty, vice, filth, and misery is surging to their doors and their back-yard fences. And here, in hall bedrooms, in third-story backs and fronts, and in half-story attics, live the Bohemians of to-day, and with them those other strugglers of poverty who are destined to become "successful men" in various branches of art, literature, science, trade, or finance. Of these latter our children will speak with hushed respect, as men who rose from small beginnings; and they will go into the school-readers of our grandchildren along with Benjamin Franklin and that contemptible wretch who got to

be a banker because he picked up a pin, as examples of what perseverance and industry can accomplish. From what I remember I foresee that those children will hate them.

I am not going to give you the addresses of the cheap restaurants where these poor, cheerful children of adversity are now eating *goulasch* and *Kartoffelsalad* instead of the spaghetti and tripe *à la mode de Caen* of their old haunts. I do not know them, and if I did, I should not hand them over to the mercies of the intrusive young men from the studios and the bachelors' chambers. I wish them good digestion of their goulasch: for those that are to climb, I wish that they may keep the generous and faithful spirit of friendly poverty; for those that are to go on to the end in fruitless struggle and in futile hope, I wish for them that that end may come in some gentle and happier region lying to the westward of that black tide that ebbs and flows by night and day along the Bowery Way.

THE STORY OF A PATH

IN one of his engaging essays Mr. John Burroughs tells of meeting an English lady in Holyoke, Mass., who complained to him that there were no foot-paths for her to walk on, whereupon the poet-naturalist was moved to an eloquent expression of his grief over America's inferiority in the foot-path line to the "mellow England" which in one brief month had won him for her own. Now I know very little of Holyoke, Mass., of my own knowledge. As a lecture-town I can say of it that its people are polite, but extremely undemonstrative, and that the lecturer is expected to furnish the refreshments. It is quite likely that the English lady was right, and that there are no foot-paths there.

I wish to say, however, that I know the English lady. I know her—many, many of her—and I have met her a-many times. I know the enchanted fairyland in which her wistful memory loves to linger. Often and often have I watched her father's wardian-case grow into "papa's hot houses;" the plain brick house that he leases, out Notting Hill way, swell into "our family mansion," and the cottage that her family once occupied at Stoke Wigglesworth change itself into "the country place that papa had to give up because it

took so much of his time to see that it was properly kept up." And long experience in this direction enables me to take that little remark about the foot-paths, and to derive from it a large amount of knowledge about Holyoke and its surroundings that I should not have had of my own getting, for I have never seen Holyoke except by night, nor am I like to see it again.

From that brief remark I know these things about Holyoke: It is surrounded by a beautiful country, with rolling hills and a generally diversified landscape. There are beautiful green fields, I am sure. There is a fine river somewhere about, and I think there must be waterfalls and a pretty little creek. The timber must be very fine, and probably there are some superb New England elms. The roads must be good, uncommonly good; and there must be unusual facilities for getting around and picknicking and finding charming views and all that sort of thing.

Nor does it require much art to learn all this from that pathetic plaint about the foot-paths. For the game of the Briton in a foreign land is ever the same. It changes not from generation unto generation. Bid him to the feast and set before him all your wealth of cellar and garner, Spread before him the meat, heap up for him the fruits of the season. Weigh down the board with every vegetable that the gardener's art can bring to perfection in or out of its time—white-potatoes, sweet-potatoes, lima-beans, string-beans, fresh peas, sweet-corn, lettuce, cauliflower, Brussels

sprouts, tomatoes, muskmelons and watermelons —all you will—no word will you hear from him till he has looked over the whole assortment and discovered that you have not the vegetable marrow, and that you do not raise it. Then he will break forth and cry for his vegetable marrow. All these things are naught to him if he cannot have his vegetable marrow, and he will tell you about the exceeding goodness and rarity of the vegetable marrow, until you will figure it in your mind like unto the famous mangosteen fruit of the Malay Peninsula, he who once eats whereof tastes never again any other fruit of the earth, finding them all as dust and ashes by the side of the mangosteen.

That is to say, this will happen unless you have eaten of the vegetable marrow, and have the presence of mind to recall to the Briton's memory the fact that it is nothing but a second-choice summer squash; after which the meal will proceed in silence. Just so might Mr. Burroughs have brought about a sudden change in the topic of conversation by telling the English lady that where the American treads out a path he builds a road by the side of it.

To tell the truth, I think that the English footpath is something pathetic beyond description. The better it is, the older, the better worn, the more it speaks with a sad significance of the long established inequalities of old-world society. It means too often the one poor, pitiful right of a poor man, the man who must walk all his life, to

go hither and thither through the rich man's country. The lady may walk it for pleasure if she likes, but the man who walks it because he must, turns up a little by-path leading from it to a cottage that no industry or thrift will make his own; and for him to aspire to a roadway to his front-door would be a gross piece of impertinence in a man of his station. It is the remembrance of just such right-of-way foot-paths as the English lady's sad heart yearned after that reconciles me to a great many hundreds of houses that have recently been built in the State of New Jersey after designs out of books that cost all the way from twenty-five cents to a dollar. Architecturally these are very much inferior to the English cottager's home, and they occasionally waken thoughts of incendiarism. But the people who live in them are people who insist on having roads right to their front-doors, and I have heard them do some mighty interesting talking in town-meeting about the way those roads shall be laid and who shall do the laying.

As I have before remarked, I am quite willing to believe that Holyoke is a pathless wilderness, in the English lady's sense. But when Mr. Burroughs makes the generalization that there are no foot-paths in this country, it seems to me he must be letting his boyhood get too far away from him.

For there are foot-paths enough, certainly. Of course an old foot-path in this country always serves to mark the line of a new road when the people who had worn it take to keeping horses.

But there are thousands of miles of paths criss-crossing the countryside in all of our older States that will never see the dirt-cart or the stone crusher in the lifetime of any man alive to-day.

Mr. Burroughs—especially when he is published in the dainty little Douglas duodecimos—is one of the authors whose books a busy man reserves for a pocket-luxury of travel. So it was that, a belated reader, I came across his lament over our pathlessness, some years after my having had a hand—or a foot, as you might say—in the making of a certain cross-lots foot-way which led me to study the windings and turnings of the longer countryside walks until I got the idea of writing "The Story of a Path." I am sorry to contradict Mr. Burroughs, but, if there are no foot-paths in America, what becomes of the many good golden hours that I have spent in well-tracked woodland ways and in narrow foot-lanes through the wind-swept meadow grass? I cannot give these up; I can only wish that Mr. Burroughs had been my companion in them.

A foot-path is the most human thing in inanimate nature. Even as the print of his thumb reveals the old offender to the detectives, so the path tells you the sort of feet that wore it. Like the human nature that created it, it starts out to go straight when strength and determination shape its course, and it goes crooked when weakness lays it out. Until you begin to study them you can have no notion of the differences of character that exist among foot-paths. One line of

trodden earth seems to you the same as another. But look! Is the path you are walking on fairly straight from point to point, yet deflected to avoid short rises and falls, *and is it worn to grade?* That is, does it plough a deep way through little humps and hillocks something as a street is cut down to grade? If you see this path before you, you may be sure that it is made by the heavy shuffle of workingmen's feet. A path that wavers from side to side, especially if the turns be from one bush to another, and that is only a light trail making an even line of wear over the inequalities of the ground—that is a path that children make. The path made by the business man—the man who is anxious to get to his work at one end of the day, and anxious to get to his home at the other—is generally a good piece of engineering. This type of man makes more paths in this country than he does in any other. He carries his intelligence and his energy into every act of life, and even in the half-unconscious business of making his own private trail he generally manages to find the line of least resistance in getting from one given point to another.

This is the story of a path:

It is called Reub Levi's Path, because Reuben Levi Dodd is supposed to have made it, some time in 1830 or thereabout, when he built his house on the hill. But it is much older than Reuben Levi. He probably thought he was telling the truth when, forty years ago, he swore to having broken the path himself twenty years before, through the

Jacobus woods, down the hill and across the flat lands that then belonged to the Onderdoncks, and again through the Ogden woods to the county road; but he forgot that on the bright June day when he first started to find a convenient way through the woods and over the broad lowland fields from his own front-door to that of his father-in-law, Evert Ogden, and then through Mr. Ogden's patch of woods to the little town on the bank of the Passaic—he forgot that for a little part of the way he had had the help of a man whose feet had long before done with walking the paths of earth.

The forest, for it was a forest then, was full of heavy underwood and brush, and he had no choice but to dodge his way between the clumps. But when he got out to the broad open space on the brow of the hill, where no trees had ever grown, he found an almost tropical growth of wild grass and azalea, with bull-brier twining over everything in every direction. He found it worse than the dense woods.

"Drat the pesky stuff," he said to himself; "ain't there no way through it?" Then as he looked about he spied a line no broader than his hand at the bottom, that opened clean through the bull-brier and the bushes across the open to where the trees began again on the down-slope of the hill. Grass was growing in it, but he knew it for an old trail.

"'Twas Pelatiah Jinks made that, I'll bet a shilling," he said to himself, remembering the

lonely old trapper who had dwelt on that mountain in his father's time He had once seen old man Jinks' powder-horn, with its elaborate carving, done in the long solitary hours when the old man sat weather-bound in his lofty hermitage.

"Jest like the old critter to make a bee-line track like that. But what in thunder did he want to go that way across the clearing for? I'm much obleeged to him for his trail, but it ain't headed right for town."

No, it was not. But young Dodd did not remember that the trees whose tops he saw just peeping over the hill were young things of forty years' growth that had taken the place of a line of ninety-year-old chestnuts that had died down from the top and been broken down by the wind shortly after old Pelatiah died. The line that the old man had made for himself took him straight to the one little hillock where he could look over this tall screen and get his bearings afresh by the glint of the Passiac's water in the woody valley below, for at no other spot along that ridge was the Passaic visible.

Now in this one act of Reuben Levi Dodd you can see the human nature that lies at the bottom of all path-making. He turned aside from his straight course to walk in the easy way made by another man, and then fetched a compass, as they used to say in the Apostle Paul's time, to get back to his straight bearings. Old Pelatiah had a good reason for deviating from his straight line to the town; young Dodd had none, except that it

was wiser to go two yards around than to go one yard straight through the bull-brier. Young Dodd had a powder-horn slung from his shoulder that morning, and the powder-horn had some carving on it, but it was not like the carving on old Pelatiah's horn. There was a letter R, cut with many flourishes, a letter L cut but wanting most of its flourishes, and a letter D half finished, and crooked at that, and without the first trace of a flourish. That was the way his powder-horn looked that day, for that was the way it looked when he died, and his son sold it to a dealer in antiquities.

Young Dodd and his wife found it lonely living up there on the hill-top. They were the first who had pushed so far back from the river and the town. Mrs. Dodd, who had an active and ambitious spirit in her, often reproached her husband for his neglect to make their home more accessible to her old friends in the distant town.

"If you'd take a bill-hook," she would say, "and clean up that snake-fence path of yours a little, maybe folks would climb up here to see us once in a blue moon. It's all well enough for you with your breeches, but how are women folks to trail their frocks through that brush?"

Reub Levi would promise and promise, and once he did take his hook and chop out a hundred yards or so. But things did not mend until Big Bill Turnbull, known all over the county as the Hard Job Man, married a widow with five children, bought a little patch of five or six acres next

to Dodd's big farm, built a log-cabin for himself and his family, and settled down there.

Now Turnbull's log-cabin was so situated that the line of old Pelatiah's path through the bull-brier, extended about an eighth of a mile, would just reach the front-door. Turnbull saw this, and it was at that point that he tapped Reub Levi's foot-path to the town. But he did his tapping after his own fashion. He took his wife's red flannel petticoat and tied it to a sapling on the top of the mound that the old hunter used to climb, and then with bill-hook and ax he cut a straight swath through the woods. He even cut down through the roots and took out the larger stones.

"That's what you'd ought to have done long ago, Reuben Levi Dodd," said his wife, as she watched this manifestation of energy.

"Guess I didn't lose much by waiting," Reub Levi answered, with a smile that did not look as self-satisfied as he tried to make it. "I'd a-had to do it myself, and now the other fellow's done it for me."

And thereafter he took Bill Turnbull's path just where it touched the corner of his own cleared land. But Malvina Dodd, to the day of her death, never once walked that way, but, going and coming, took the winding track that her husband had laid out for her when their home was built.

The next maker of the path was a boy not ten years old. His name was Philip Wessler, and he was a charity boy of German parentage, who had been adopted by an eccentric old man in the town,

an herb-doctor. This calling was in more repute in those days than it is now. Old Doctor Van Wagener was growing feeble, and he relied on the boy, who was grateful and faithful, to search for his stock of simples. When the weather was favorable they would go together through the Ogden woods, and across the meadows to where the other woods began at the bottom of the hill. Here the old man would sit down and wait, while the boy climbed the steep hillside, and ranged hither and thither in his search for sassafras and liverwort, and a hundred and one plants, flowers, and herbs, in which the doctor found virtue. When he had collected his bundle he came running down the path to where the doctor sat, and left them for the old man to pick and choose from, while he darted off after another load.

He did a boy's work with the path. Steep grades were only a delight to him, and so in the course of a year or two he trod out, or jumped out, a series of break-neck short-cuts. William Turnbull—people called him William now, since he had built a clap-board house, and was using the log-cabin for a barn—William Turnbull, observing these short-cuts, approved of their purpose, but not of their method. He went through the woods once or twice on odd days after his hay was in, and did a little grading with a mattock. Here and there he made steps out of flat stones. He told his wife he thought it would be some handier for her, and she told him—they were both from Connecticut—that it was quite some handier,

and that it was real thoughtful of him; and that she didn't want to speak no ill of the dead, but if her first man had been that considerate he wouldn't never have got himself drowned going pickerel fishing in March, when the ice was so soft you'd suppose rational folks would keep off of it.

This path was a path of slow formation. It was a path that was never destined to become a road. It is only in mathematics that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. The grade through the Jacobus woods was so steep that no wagon could have been hauled up it over the mud roads of that day and generation. Lumber, groceries, and all heavy truck were taken around by the road that made a clean sweep around the hill, and was connected with the Dodd and Turnbull farms by a steep but short lane which the workmen had made when they built the Dodd house. The road was six miles to the path's three, but the drive was shorter than the walk.

There was a time when it looked as though the path might really develop into a road. That was the time when the township, having outgrown the county roads, began to build roads for itself. But, curiously enough, two subjects of Great Britain settled the fate of that New Jersey path. The controversy between Telford and Macadam was settled so long ago in Macadam's favor, that few remember the point of difference between those two noted engineers. Briefly stated, it was this: Mr. Telford said it *was,* and Mr. Macadam

said it was *not*, necessary to put a foundation of large flat stones, set on end, under a broken-stone road. Reuben Levi's township, like many other New Jersey townships, sided with Mr. Telford, and made a mistake that cost thousands of dollars directly, and millions indirectly. To-day New Jersey can show the way to all her sister States in road-building and road-keeping. But the money she wasted on costly Telford pavements is only just beginning to come back to her, as she spreads out mile after mile of the economical Macadam. Reuben Levi's township squandered money on a few miles of Telford, raised the tax-rate higher than it had ever been before, and opened not one inch of new road for fifteen years thereafter. And within that fifteen years the canal came up on one side, opening a way to the great manufacturing town, ten miles down the river; and then the town at the end of the path was no longer the sole base of supplies. Then the railroad came around on the other side of the hill, and put a flag-station just at the bottom of what had come to be known as Dodd's Lane. And thus by the magic of nineteenth-century science New York and Newark were brought nearer to the hill-side farm than the town three miles away.

But year by year new feet trod the path. The laborers who cut the canal found it and took it when they left their shanty camp to go to town for Saturday-night frolics. Then William Turnbull, who had enlarged his own farm as far as he found it paid, took to buying land and building

houses in the valley beyond. Reub Levi laughed at him, but he prospered after a way he had, and built up a thriving little settlement just over the canal. The people of this little settlement soon made a path that connected with Reuben Levi's, by way of William Turnbull's, and whenever business or old associations took them to town they helped to make the path longer and broader.

By and by the regular wayfarers found it out—the peddlers, the colporteurs, the wandering portrait-painters, the tinkers and clock-menders, the runaway apprentices, and all the rest of the old time gentry of the road. And they carried the path on still farther—down the river to Newark.

It is not wholly to be told, "The Story of the Path." So many people had to do with its making in so many ways that no chronicle could tell all the meanings of its twists and turns and straight lines. There is one little jog in its course to-day, where it went around a tree, the stump of which rotted down into the ground a quarter of a century ago. Why do we walk around that useless bend to-day? Because it is a path, and because we walk in the way of human nature.

The life of a tree may be a hundred years or two hundred years and yet be long life. But the days of the age of a man are threescore and ten, and though some be so strong that they come to fourscore, yet the strong man may be stricken down in the flower of his strength, if it be the will of the Lord.

When William Turnbull came to die he was but

twoscore years and five, but for all he was so young the people of the township gathered from far and near, for he had been a helpful man all his days, and those whom he had helped remembered that he would help them no more. Four men and four women sat up with the dead, twice as many as the old custom called for. One of the men was a Judge, two had been Chosen Freeholders, and the fourth was his hired man. There was no cemetery in the township, and his tomb had been built at the bottom of the hill, looking out on the meadows which he had just made his own—the last purchase of his life.

There were two other pall-bearers to carry him on their shoulders to the place beyond which no man goes. These two, when they left the house on the night before the funeral, walked slowly and thoughtfully down the path together. They looked over every step of the way with to-morrow's slow and toilsome march in their minds. When they came to the turn by Pelatiah's mound they paused.

"We can't never get him round that bend," said one. "That ain't no way to start down the hill. Best is I come here first thing in the morning and cut a way through this bull-brier straight across the angle, then we can see ahead where we're going. Put them two light men behind, and you and me at the head, and we can manage it. My! what a man *he* was, though! Why, I seen him take the head of a coffin all by himself once."

This man was a near neighbor of the Turnbulls,

for now they had a number of neighbors; Reuben Levi Dodd had been selling small farms off his big farm—somehow he had never made the big farm a success. There are many services of men to man that country neighbors make little of, though to the dwellers in great cities they might seem strange burdens. At five o'clock the next morning Warren Freeman, the pall-bearer, went out and mowed and hacked a path through the tangled field from midway of old Pelatiah's trail down to a short-cut made by the doctor's charity boy, who was to-day a Judge. This Judge came out of the silent house, released by the waking hour, from his vigil with the dead. He watched his fellow pall-bearer at work.

"I used to go down that path on the dead run twenty years ago," said he, "when I was working for Dr. Van Wagener and he used to send me up here gathering herbs."

"You'll go down it on the dead walk to-morrow, Jedge," said the other, pausing in his work, "and you want to step mighty careful, or one fun'l will breed another."

Life, death, wedlock, the lingering of lovers, the waywardness of childish feet, the tread of weary toil, the slow, swaying walk of the mother, with her babe in her arms, the measured steps of the bearer of the dead, the light march of youth and strength and health—all, all have helped to beat out the strange, wandering line of the old path; and to me, who love to find and to tread its turns, the current of their human life flows still along

its course, in the dim spaces under the trees, or out where the sunshine and the wind are at play upon the broad, bright meadows.

THE LOST CHILD

THE best of life in a great city is that it breeds a broad and tolerant catholicity of spirit: the best of country life is that it breeds the spirit of helpful, homely, kindly neighborliness. The suburban-dweller, who shares in both lives, is perhaps a little too ready to pride himself in having learned the lesson of the great metropolis, but the other and homelier lesson is taught so gradually and so unobtrusively, that he often learns it quite unconsciously; and goes back, perhaps, to his old existence in the city, only to realize that a certain charm has gone out of life which he misses without knowing just what he has lost. He thinks, perhaps, it is exercise he lacks. And it is, indeed—the exercise of certain gentle sympathies, that thrive as poorly in the town's crowded life as the country wild-flowers thrive in the flower-pots of tenement-house windows.

It was between three and four o'clock of an August night—a dark, warm, hazy night, breathless, heavy and full of the smell of grass and trees and dew-moistened earth, when a man galloped up one of those long suburban streets, where the houses stand at wide intervals, each behind its trim lawn, or old-fashioned flower-garden,

relieved, even in the darkness, against a great rear-wood screen of lofty trees. Up the driveway of one of these he turned, his horse's hoof beats dropping clear and sharp on the hard macadam. He reined up at the house and rapped a loud tattoo with the stock of his whip on a pillar of the veranda.

It was a minute or two before the noise, loud as it was, had reached the ears of two sleepers in the bedroom, just above his head. A much less startling sound would have awakened a whole city household; but slumber in the country has a slumber of its own: in summer time a slumber born of night-air, laden with the odors of vegetation, and silent except for the drowsy chirp of birds that stir in vine and tree. The wife awoke first, listened for a second, and aroused her husband, who went to the window. He raised the screen and looked out.

"Who is it?" he said, without nervousness or surprise, though ten years before in his city home such a summons might have shaken his spirit with anxious dread.

"I'm Latimer," said the man on the horse, briefly. "That boy of Penrhyn's—the little one with the yellow hair—is lost. He got up and slipped out of the house, somehow, about an hour ago, they think, and they've found one of his playthings nearly half a mile down the Romneytown Road."

"Where shall I meet you?" asked the man at the window.

"At the Gun-Club grounds on the hill," replied Latimer; "we've sent a barrel of oil up there for the lanterns. So long, Halford. Is Dirck at home?"

"Yes," said Halford; and without another word Latimer galloped into the darkness, and in a minute the sound of his tattoo was heard on the hollow pillars of the veranda of the house next door.

This was the summons—a bare announcement of an event without appeal, request, suggestion, or advice. None of these things was needed. Enough had been said between the two men, though they knew each other only as distant neighbors. Each knew well what that summons meant, and what duty it involved.

The rat-tat of Latimer's crop had hardly sounded before a cheery young voice rang out on the air.

"All right, old man! I heard you at Halford's. Go ahead."

It was Dirck's voice. Dirck had another name, a good long Holland-Dutch one, but everybody, even the children, called him by his Christian name, and as he had lived to thirty without getting one day older than eighteen, we will consider the other Dutch name unnecessary. Dirck and Halford were close friends and close neighbors. They were two men who had reached a point of perfect community of tastes and inclinations, though they came together in two widely different starting-places—though they were so little alike

to outward seeming that they were known among their friends as "the mismates." Though one was forty and the other but thirty, each had closed a career, and was somewhat idly seeking a new one. As Dirck expressed it, "We two fellows had played our games out, and were waiting till we strike another that was high enough for our style. We ain't playing limit games."

Two very different games they had been, but neither had been a small one. Dirck had started in with a fortune to "do" the world—the whole world, nothing else would suit him. He had been all over the globe. He had lived among all manner of peoples. He had ridden everything ridable, shot everything shootable, climbed everything climbable, and satisfied himself, as he said, that the world was too small for any particular use. At the end of his travels he had a little of his fortune left, a vast amount of experience, the constitution of a red Indian, and a vocabulary so vast and so peculiar that it stunned and fascinated the stranger. Halford was a New York lawyer, gray, clean-shaven, and sharp of feature. His "game" had made him famous and might have made him wealthy, but he cared neither for fame nor wealth. For twenty years he had fought a host of great corporations to establish one single point of law. His antagonist had vainly tried to bribe him, and as vainly to bully him. He had been assaulted, his life had been threatened, and altogether, as he admitted, the game had been lively enough to

keep him interested; but having once won the game he tired of that style of play altogether. He picked out a small but choice practice which permitted him to work or be idle pretty much as the fancy took him. These were two odd chums to meet in a small suburban town, there to lead quiet and uneventful lives, and yet they were the two most contented men in the place.

Halford was getting into his clothes, but really with a speed and precision which got the job over before his impetuous next-door neighbor had got one leg of his riding-breeches on. Mrs. Halford sat up in bed and expressed her feeling to her husband, who had never been known to express his.

"Oh, Jack," she said, "isn't it awful? Would you ever have thought of such a thing! They must have been awfully careless! Oh, Jack, you will find him, won't you? Jack, if such a thing happened to one of our children I should go wild; I'll never get over it myself if he isn't found. Oh, you don't know how thankful I am that we didn't lose our Richard that way! Oh, Jack, dear, isn't it too horrible for anything!"

Jack simply responded, with no trace of emotion in his voice:

"It's the hell!"

And yet in those three words Jack Halford expressed, in his own way, quite as much as his wife had expressed in hers. More, even, for there was a grim promise in his tone that comforted her heart.

Mrs. Halford's feelings being expressed and in some measure relieved, she promptly became practical.

"I'll fill your flask, of course, dear. Brandy, I suppose? And what shall we women take up to the Gun Club besides blankets and clean clothes?"

Mrs. Halford's husband always thought before he spoke, and she was not at all surprised that he filled his tobacco-pouch before he answered. When he did speak he knew what he had to say.

"First something to put in my pocket for Dirck and me to eat. We can't fool with coming home to breakfast. Second, tell the girls to send up milk to the Gun Club, and something for you women to eat."

"Oh, I shan't want anything to eat," cried Mrs. Halford.

"You must eat," said her husband, simply, "and you must make the rest of them eat. You might do all right without it, but I wouldn't trust the rest of them. You may need all the nerve you've got."

"Yes, dear," said his wife, submissively. She had been with her husband in times of danger, and she knew he was a leader to be followed. "I'll have sandwiches and coffee and tea; I can make them drink tea, anyway."

"Third," went on Jack Halford, as if he had not been interrupted, "bring my field-glass with you. Dirck and I will range together along the river. If I put up a white handkerchief any-

where down there, you stay where you are and we will come to you. If I put up this red one, come right down with blankets and brandy in the first carriage you can get hold of. Get on the north edge of the hill and you can keep a line on us almost anywhere."

"Couldn't you give us some signal, dear, to tell us if—if—if it's all right?"

"If it was all wrong," replied the husband, "you wouldn't want the mother to learn it that way. I'll signal to you privately, however. If it's all right, I'll wave the handkerchief; if I move it up and down, you'll understand."

Two minutes later he bade her good-by at the door.

"Now remember," he said, "white means wait, red means ride."

And having delivered himself of this simple mnemonic device, he passed out into the darkness.

At the next gate he met Dirck and the two swung into step together, and walked up the street with the steady, stretching tread of men accustomed to walking long distances. They said "Hello!" as they met, and their further conversation was brief.

"River," said Halford; "what do you think?"

"River, sure," said the other; "a lot of those younger boys have been taking the youngsters down there lately. I saw that kid down there last week, and I'll bet a dollar his mother would swear that he'd never seen the river."

"Then we won't say anything about it to her," said Halford, and they reached along in silence.

Before them, when they came to the end of the road, rose a hill with a broad plateau on its stomach. Here through the dull haze of the morning they saw smoky-orange lights beginning to flicker uncertainly as the wind that heralds the sunrise came fitfully up. The soft wet grass under their feet was flecked with little grayish-silver cobwebs, and here and there they heard the morning chirp of ground-nesting birds. As they went farther up the hill a hum of voices came from above; the voices of people, men and women, mingled and consonant like the voices of the birds, but with a certain tone of trouble and expectancy. Every now and then one individual voice or another would dominate the general murmur, and would be followed by a quick flutter of sound denoting acquiescence or disagreement. From this they knew that most of their neighbors had arrived before them, having been summoned earlier in the journey of the messengers sent out from the distant home of the lost child.

On the crown of the hill stood a curious structure, actually small, but looming large in the grayness. The main body of the building was elevated upon posts, and was smaller at the bottom than where the spreading walls met the peaked roof. This roof spread out on both sides into broad verandas, and under these two wing-like shelters some three or four score of people

were clustered in little groups. Lanterns and hand-lamps dimly lit up faces that showed strange in the unfamiliar illumination. There were women with shawls over their shoulders and women with shawls over their heads. Some of the men were in their shirt-sleeves, some wore shooting-coats, and a few had overcoats, though the night was warm. But no stranger arriving on the scene could have taken it for a promiscuous or accidental assemblage. There was a movement in unison, a sympathetic stir throughout the little crowd that created a common interest and a common purpose. The arrival of the two men was hailed with that curious sound with which such a gathering greets a desired and attended accession—not quite the sigh of relief, but the quick, nervous expulsion of the breath that tallies the coming of the expected. These were two of the men to be counted on, and they were there.

Every little community such as this knows its leaders, and now that their number was complete, the women drew together by themselves save for two or three who clearly took equal direction with the men; and a dozen in all, perhaps, gathered in a rough circle to discuss the organization of the search.

It was a brief discussion. A majority of the members of the group had formed decided opinions as to the course taken by the wandering child, and thus a division into sub-groups came about at once. This left various stretchings of territory uncovered, and these were assigned to those of the

more decided minority who were best acquainted with the particular localities. When the division of labor was completed, the men had arranged to start out in such directions as would enable them to range and view the whole countryside for the extreme distance of radius to which it was supposed the boy could possibly have travelled. The assignment of Halford and Dirck to the river course was prompt, for it was known that they habitually hunted and fished along that line. The father of the boy, who stood by, was reminded of this fact, for a curious and doubtful look came into his face when he heard two of the most active and energetic men in the town set aside to search a region where he had no idea that his boy could have strayed. Some excuse was given also for the detailing of two other men of equal ability to take the range immediately above the river bank, and within hailing distance of those in the marshes by the shore. Had his mind not been in the daze of mortal grief and perplexity, he would have grasped the sinister significance of this precaution; but he accepted it in dull and hopeless confidence. When after they had set forth he told his wife of the arrangements made, and she heard the names of the four men who had been appointed to work near the riverside, she pulled the faded old Paisley shawl (that the child's nurse had wrapped about her) across her swollen eyes, and moaned, "The river, the river—oh, my boy, my boy!"

Perhaps the men heard her, for being all in place

to take their several directions, they made a certain broken start and were off into the darkness at the base of the hill, before the two or three of their sex who were left in charge of the women had fairly given the word. The tramp of men's feet and horses' hoofs died down into the shadowy distance. The women went inside the spacious old corn-crib that had been turned into a gun-club shooting-box, and there the mother laid her face on the breast of her best friend, and clung to her without a sound, only shuddering once and again, and holding her with a convulsive grip. The other women moved around, and busied themselves with little offices, like the making of tea and the trimming of lamps, and talked among each other in a quiet way with the odd little upward inflections with which women simulate cheerfulness and hope, telling tales of children who had been lost and had been found again all safe and unscathed, and praising the sagacity and persistence of certain of the men engaged in the search. Mr. Latimer, they said, was almost like a detective, he had such an instinct for finding things and people. Mr. Brown knew every field and hollow on the Brookfield Road. Mr. MacDonald could see just as well in the darkness as in the daytime; and all the talk that reached the mother's ears was of this man's skill of woodcraft, of that man's knowledge of the country, or of another's unfailing cleverness or tirelessness.

Outside, the two or three men in charge stood by the father in their own way. It had been agreed

that he should wait at the hilltop to learn if a trail had been found. He was a good fellow, but not helpful or capable; and it was their work to "jolly" him, as they called it; to keep his hope up with cheering suggestions, and with occasional judicious doses of whiskey from their flasks. For themselves, they did not drink; though their voices were low and steady they were more nervous than the poor sufferer they guarded, numbed and childish in his awful grief and apprehension. They were waiting for the sounds of the beginning of the search far below, and presently these sounds came, or rather one sound, a hollow noise, changeful, uneven, yet of cruel monotony. It was a cry of "Willy! Willy! Willy!" rising out of that gray-black depth, a cry of many voices, a cry that came from far and near, a cry at which the women huddled closer together and pressed each other's hands, and looked speechless love and pity at the woman who lay upon her best friend's breast, clutching it tighter and tighter. Of the men outside, the father leaned forward and clutched the arm of his chair. The others saw the great drops of sweat roll from his brow, and they turned their faces away from him and swore inaudibly.

Then, as the deep below began to be alive with a faint dim light reflected from the half awakened heaven, the voices died away in the distance, and in their place the leaves of the great trees rustled and the birds twittered to the coming morn.

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The day broke with the dull red that prophesies

heat. As the hours wore on the prophecy was fulfilled. The moisture of the dew and the river mist rose toward the hot sky and vanished, but the dry haze remained and the low sun shone through it with a peculiar diffusion of coppery light. Even when it reached the zenith, the warm, faintly yellow dimness still rose high above the horizon, throwing its soft spell upon all objects far or near, and melting through the dim blue on the distant hilltop into the hot azure of the great dome above.

For an hour the watchers on the hill remained undisturbed, talking in undertones. For the most part, they speculated on the significance of the faint sounds that came up from below. Sometimes they could trace the crash of a horse through dry underbrush; sometimes a tumultuous clamor of commanding voices would tell them that a flat boat was being worked across a broad creek or a pond; sometimes a hardly audible whirr, and the metallic clinking of a bicycle bell would tell them that the wheelmen were speeding on the search. But for the best part of the time only nature's harmony of sounds came up through the ever-lightening gloom.

But with the first of daylight came the neighbors who had not been summoned, and they, of course, came running. It was also noticeable of this contingent that their attire was somewhat studied, and showed more or less elaborate preparation for starting on the already started hunt. Noticeable also it was, that after much sagacious questioning

and profoundly wise discussion, the most of the newcomers either hung about peering out into the dawn and making startling discoveries at various points, or else went back to their houses to get bicycles, or horses, or forgotten suspenders. The little world of a suburban town sorts itself out pretty quickly and pretty surely. There are the men who do and the men who don't; and very few of the men who *did,* in that particular town, were in bed half an hour after the loss of that child was known.

But, after all, the late arrivals were useful in their way, and their wives, who came along later, were still more useful. The men were fertile in suggestions for tempting and practicable breakfasts; and the women actually brought the food along; and by the time that the world was well alight, the early risers were bustling about and serving coffee and tea, and biscuits and fruit, and keeping up that semblance of activity and employment that alone can carry poor humanity through long periods of suspense and anxiety. And the first on the field were the last to eat and the least critical of their fare.

It was eight o'clock when the first party of searchers returned to the hill. There were eight of them. They stopped a little below the crib and beckoned to Penrhyn to come down to them. He went, white-faced and a little unsteady on his feet; his guardians followed him and joined with the group in a busy serious talk that lasted perhaps five minutes—but vastly longer to the women who

watched them from above. Then Penrhyn and two men went hastily down the hill, and the others came up to the crib and eagerly accepted the offer of a hasty breakfast.

They had little to tell, and that little only served to deepen the doubt and trouble of the hour. Of all the complications of unkind chance the searchers had to face the worst and the most puzzling. As in many towns of old settlement a road ran around the town, roughly circumscribing it, much as the boulevards of Paris anciently circumscribed the old fortifications of that city. It was little more than a haphazard connection of roads, lanes, and avenues, each one of which had come into existence to serve some particular end, and the connection had ended in forming a circuit that practically defined the town limits. It had been made certain that the boy had wandered this whole round, and that he had not left it by any one of the converging roads which he must have crossed. Nor could the direction of his wandering be ascertained. The hard, dry macadam road, washed clean by a recent rainfall, showed no trace of his light, infantile footprints. But sure it was that he had been on the road not one hour, but two or three at least, and that he had started out with an armful of his tiny belongings. Here they had found his small pocket-handkerchief, there a gray giraffe from his Noah's ark; in another place a noseless doll that had descended to him from his eldest sister; then a top had been found—a top that he could not have spun for years to come.

Would the years ever come when that lost boy should spin tops?

There were other little signs which attested his passage around the circle—freshly broken stalks of milkweed, shreds of his brightly figured cotton dress on the thorns of the wayside blackberries, and even in one place the print of a muddy and bloody little hand on a white gate-post.

There is no search more difficult than a search for a lost child five or six years of age. We are apt to think of these wee ones as feeble creatures, and we forget that their physical strength is proportionally much greater than that of grown-up people. We forget also that the child has not learned to attribute sensations of physical discomfort to their proper sources. The child knows that it suffers, but it does not know why. It is conscious of a something wrong, but the little brain is often unable to tell whether that something be weariness or hunger. If the wandering spirit be upon it, it wanders to the last limit of physical power, and it is surprising indeed to find how long it is before that limit is reached. A healthy, muscular infant of this age has been known to walk nearly eight or ten miles before becoming utterly exhausted. And when exhaustion comes, and the tiny form falls in its tracks, how small an object it is to detect in the great world of outdoors! A little bundle of dusty garments in a ditch, in a wayside hollow, in tall grass, or among the tufts and hummocks of a marsh—how easy it is for so inconspicuous an object to

escape the eye of the most zealous searcher! A young animal lost cries incessantly; the lost child cries out his pitiful little cry, finds itself lifted to no tender bosom, soothed by no gentle voice, and in the end wanders and suffers in helpless, hopeless silence.

As the morning wore on Dirck and Halford beat the swampy lands of the riverside with a thoroughness that showed their understanding of the difficulty of their work, and their conviction that the child had taken that direction. This conviction deepened with every hour, for the rest of the countryside was fairly open and well populated, and there the search should have been, for such a search, comparatively easy. Yet the sun climbed higher and higher in the sky, and no sound of guns fired in glad signal reached their ears. Hither and thither they went through the hot lowlands, meeting and parting again, with appointments to come together in spots known to them both, or separating without a word, each knowing well where their courses would bring them together. From time to time they caught glimpses of their companions on the hills above, who, from their height, could see the place of meeting on the still higher hill, and each time they signalled the news and got back the despairing sign that meant "None yet!"

News enough there was, but not *the* news. Mrs. Penrhyn still stayed, for her own house was so situated that the child could not possibly return to it, if he had taken the direction that now seemed

certain, without passing through the crowd of searchers, and intelligence of his discovery must reach her soonest at that point. Perhaps there was another reason, too. Perhaps she could not bear to return to that silent house, where every room held some reminder of her loss. Certainly she remained at the Club, and perhaps she got some unreasoning comfort out of the rumors and reports that came to that spot from every side. It was but the idle talk that springs up and flies about on such occasions, but now and then it served as a straw for her drowning hope to clutch at. Word would come of a farmer who had seen a strange child in his neighbor's wagon. Then would come a story of an innkeeper who had driven into town to ask if anybody had lost a boy. Then somebody would bring a report at third or fourth hand of a child rescued alive from the river. Of course story after story, report after report, came to nothing. The child seen in the wagon was a girl of fourteen. The innkeeper had come to town to ask about the lost child, but it was only because he had heard the report and was curious. A child indeed had been rescued from the river, but the story was a week old. And so it went, and the hot sun rose to its zenith and declined, and the coppery haze grew dim, and the shadows lengthened, and the late afternoon was come with its awful threat of impending night.

Dirck and Halford, down in the riverside marsh, saw that dreaded change fall upon the landscape, and they paused in their search and looked at one

another silently. They had been ceaselessly at work all day, and the work had left its marks on them. Their faces were burnt to a fiery red, they were torn and scratched in the brambles, their clothes were soaked in mud and water to the waist, and they had been bitten and stung by insects until they looked as though some strange fever had broken out on them.

They had just met after a long beat, each having described the half of a circle around a piece of open water, and had sunk down in utter weariness on a little patch of dry ground, and for a minute looked at each other in silence. Then the younger man spoke.

"Hal," he said, "he never came this far."

By way of answer the other drew from his pocket a child's shoe, worn and wet, and held it up.

"Where did you find it?" asked Dirck.

"Right over there," said Halford, "near that old wagon-trail."

Dirck looked at him with a question in his eyes, which found its answer in the grave inclination of the elder's head. Then Dirck shook his head and whistled—one long, low, significant whistle.

"Well," he said, "I thought so. Any trail?"

"Not the least," replied Halford. "There's a strip of thick salt grass there, over two yards wide, and I found the shoe right in the middle of it. It was lying on its side when I found it, not caught in the grass."

"Then they were carrying him, sure," said

Dirck, decisively. "Now then, the question is, which way."

The two men went over to the abandoned roadway, a mere trail of ruts, where, in years before, ox-teams had hauled salt hay. Up and down the long strip of narrow grass that bordered it, they went backward and forward, hunting for traces of men's feet, for they knew by this time, almost beyond doubt, that the child was in the hands of tramps. The "tramp-hole" is an institution in all suburban regions which are bordered by stretches of wild and unfrequented country. These tramp-holes or camps are the headquarters of bands of wanderers who come year after year to dwell sometimes for a week, sometimes for months. The same spot is always occupied, and there seems to be an understanding among all the bands that the original territory shall not be exceeded. The tramps who establish these "holes" are invariably professionals, and never casual vagabonds; and apparently they make it a point of honor to conduct themselves with a certain propriety while they are in camp. Curiously enough, too, they seem to come to the tramp-hole, mainly for the purpose of doing what it is supposed that a tramp never does, namely: washing themselves and their clothes. I have seen on a chill November day, in one of these places, half a dozen men, naked to the waist, scrubbing themselves, or drying their wet shirts before the fire. I have always found them perfectly peaceable, and I have never known them to accost lonely passers-by,

or women or children. If a shooting or fishing party comes along, however, large enough to put any accusation of terrorism out of the question, it is not uncommon for the "hoboes" to make a polite suggestion that the poor man would be the better for his beer; and so well is the reputation of these queer camps established that the applicant generally receives such a collection of five-cent pieces as will enable him to get a few quarts for himself and his companions.

Still, in spite of the mysterious system of government that sways these banded wanderers on the face of the earth, it happens occasionally that the tramp of uncontrollable instincts finds his way into the tramp-hole, and there, if his companions are not numerous or strong enough to withstand him, commits some outrage that excites popular indignation and leads to the utter abolition of one of the few poor outdoor homes that the tramp can call his own, by the grace and indulgence of the world of workers. That such a thing had happened now the two searchers for the lost child feared with an unspeakable fear.

Dirck straightened himself up after a careful inspection of the strip of salt grass turf, and looking up at the ridge, blew a loud, shrill whistle on his two fingers. There was no answer. They had gone a full mile beyond call of their followers.

"I'll tell you what, old man," said Dirck, with the light of battle coming into his young eyes, "we'll do this thing ourselves." His senior smiled, but even as he smiled he knit his brows.

"I'll go you, my boy," he said, "so far as to look them up at the canal-boats. If they are not there we've got to go back and start the rest off. It may be a question of horses, and it may be a question of telegraphing."

"Well, let's have one go at them, anyway," said Dirck. He was no less tender-hearted than his companion; he wanted to find the child, but also he wanted, being young and strong and full of fight, to hunt tramps.

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There were three tramp-holes by the river-side, but two were sheltered hollows used only in the winter-time. The third was a collection of abandoned canal-boats on the muddy strand of the river. Most of them were hopeless wrecks; in three or four a few patches of deck remained, enough to afford lodgment and shelter to the reckless wayfarers who made nothing of sleeping close to the polluted waters that permeated the rotten hulks with foul stains and fouler smells.

From the largest of these long, clumsy carcasses of boats came a sound of muffled laughter. The two searchers crept softly up, climbed noiselessly to the deck and looked down the hatchway. The low, red sun poured in through a window below them, leaving them in shadow and making a picture in red light and black shades of the strange group below.

Surrounded by ten tramps; ten dirty, uncouth, unshaven men of the road, sat the little Penrhyn

boy, his little night-shirt much travel-stained and torn, his fat legs scratched and bruised, his soiled cheeks showing the traces of tears, his lips dyed with the juices of the berries he had eaten on his way, but happy, happy, happy—happier perhaps than he had ever been in his life before; for in his hand he held a clay pipe which he made persistent efforts to smoke, while one of the men, a big black-bearded animal who wore three coats, one on top of the other, gently withdrew it from his lips each time that the smoke grew dangerously thick. And the whole ten of them, sitting around him in their rags and dirt, cheered him and petted him and praised him, even as no polite assemblage had ever worshipped him before. No food, no drink could have been so acceptable to that delicately nurtured child of the house of Penrhyn as the rough admiration of those ten tramps. Whatever terrors, sufferings, or privations he had been through were all forgotten, and he crowed and shrieked with hysterical laughter. And when his two rescuers dropped down into the hole, instead of welcoming them with joy, he grabbed one of the collars of the big brute with the three coats and wept in dire disappointment and affright.

"Fore God, boss!" said the spokesman of the gang, the sweat standing out on his brow, "we didn't mean him no harm, and we wouldn't have done him no harm neither. We found de little blokey over der in the ma'sh yonder, and we tuk him in and fed him de best we could. We was goin' to take him up to the man what keeps the

gin-mill up the river there, for we hadn't no knowledge of where he come from, and we didn't want to get none of you folks down on us. I know we oughter have took him up two hours ago, but he was foolin' that funny-like that we all got kinder stuck on it, see, and we kinder didn't want to shake him. That's all there was to it, boss. God in heaven be my judge, I ain't lyin', and that's the truth!"

The faces of the ten tramps could not turn white, but they did show an ashen fear under their eyes—a deadly fear of the two men for whom any one of them would have been more than a match, but who represented the world from which they were outcasts, the world of Home, of whose most precious sweetness they had stolen an hour's enjoyment—the world so strong and terrible to avenge a wrong to its best beloved.

Then the silence was broken by the voice of the child, wailing piteously:

"I don't want to be tooken away from the raggedty gentlemen!"

Dirck still looked suspicious as he took the weeping child, but Halford smiled grimly, thoughtfully and sadly, as he put his hand in his pocket and said: "I guess it's all right, boys, but I think you'd better get away for the present. Take this and get over the river and out of the county. The people have been searching for this baby all day, and I don't know whether they'll listen to my friend and me."

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The level red light had left the valleys and low places, and lit alone the hilltop where the mother was watching, when a great shout came out of the darkness, spreading from voice to voice through the great expanse below, and echoed wildly from above, thrilling men's blood and making hearts stand still; and as it rose and swelled and grew toward her out of the darkness, the mother knew that her lost child was found.

A LETTER TO TOWN

FERNSEED STATION,
ATLANTIS CO., NEW ——
February 30, 189—.

MY DEAR MODESTUS:—You write me that circumstances have decided you to move your household from New York to some inexpensively pleasant town, village or hamlet in the immediate neighborhood, and you ask me the old, old innocent question:

"Shall I like suburban life?"

This question I can answer most frankly and positively:

"No, certainly not. You will not like it at all."

There is no such thing as *liking* a country life—for I take it that you mean to remove to the real suburban countryside, and not to one of those abominable and abhorrent deserts of paved streets laid out at right angles, and all supplied with sewers and electric light wires and water-mains before the first lonely house escapes from the house-pattern books to tempt the city dweller out to that dreary, soulless waste which has all the modern improvements and not one tree. I take it, I say, that you are going to no such cheap back-extension of a great city, but that you are really

going among the trees and water-courses, severing all ties with the town, save the railway's glittering lines of steel—or, since I have thought of it I might as well say the railway ties.

If that is what your intent is, and you carry it out firmly, you are going to a life which you can never like, but which you may learn to love.

How should it be possible that you should enjoy taking up a new life, with new surroundings, new anxieties, new responsibilities, new duties, new diversions, new social connections—new conditions of every kind—after living half a lifetime in New York? It is true that, being a born New Yorker, you know very little indeed of the great city you live in. You know the narrow path you tread, coming and going, from your house to your office, and from your office to your house. It follows, as closely as it may, the line of Broadway and Fifth Avenue. The elevated railroads bound it downtown; and uptown fashion has drawn a line a few hundred yards on either side, which you have only to cross, to east or to west, to find a strange exposition of nearsightedness come upon your friends. Here and there you do, perhaps, know some little by-path that leads to a club or a restaurant, or to a place of amusement. After a number of books have been written at you, you have ventured timorously and feebly into such unknown lands as Greenwich Village; or that poor, shabby, elbowing stretch of territory that used to be interesting, in a simple way, when it was called the French Quarter. It is now supposed to be the Bohemian Quarter,

and rising young artists invite parties of society ladies to go down to its table d'hôte restaurants, and see the desperate young men of the bachelor-apartments smoke cigarettes and drink California claret without a sign of trepidation.

As I say, that is pretty near all you know of the great, marvellous, multitudinous town you live in —a city full of strange people, of strange occupations, of strange habits of life, of strange contrasts of wealth and poverty; of a new life of an indescribable crudity, and of an old life that breeds to-day the very atmosphere of the historic past. Your feet have never strayed in the side paths where you might have learned something of the infinite and curious strangeness of this strange city.

But, after all, this is neither here nor there. You have accustomed yourself to the narrow dorsal strip that is all New York to you. Therein are contained the means of meeting your every need, and of gratifying your every taste. There are your shops, your clubs, your libraries, your schools, your theatres, your art-galleries, and the houses of all your friends, except a few who have ventured a block or so outside of that magic line that I spoke of a little while ago. And now you are not only going to cross that line yourself, but to pass the fatal river beyond it, to burn your boats behind you, and to settle in the very wilderness. And you ask me if you will like it!

No, Modestus, you will not. You have made up your mind, of course, to the tedium of the two railway journeys every weekday, and when you have

made friends with your fellow-commuters, you get to like it, for your morning trip in will take the place with you of your present afternoon call at your club. And you are pretty sure to enjoy the novelty of the first few months. You have moved out in the spring, and, dulled as your perceptions are by years of city life, you cannot fail to be astonished and thrilled, and perhaps a little bit awed, at the wonder of that green awakening. And when you see how the first faint, seemingly half-doubtful promise of perfect growth is fulfilled by the procession of the months, you yourself will be moved with the desire to work this miracle, and to make plants and flowers grow at your own will. You will begin to talk of what you are going to do next year—for you have taken a three years' lease, I trust—if only as an evidence of good faith. You will lay out a tract for your flower garden and your vegetable garden, and you will borrow your neighbor's seed-catalogue, and you will plan out such a garden as never blossomed since Eden.

And in your leisure days, of course, you *will* enjoy it more or less. You will sit on your broad veranda in the pleasant mornings and listen to the wind softly brushing the tree-tops to and fro, and look at the blue sky through the leaf-framed spaces in the cool, green canopy above you; and as you remember the cruel, hot, lifeless days of summer in your town house, when you dragged through the weeks of work that separated you from the wife and children at the seaside or in the mountains—

then, Modestus, you must look upon what is before you, and say: it is good.

It is true that you can't get quite used to the sensation of wearing your tennis flannels at your own domestic breakfast table, and you cannot help feeling as if somebody had stolen your clothes, and you were going around in your pajamas. But presently your friend—for of course you have followed the trail of a friend, in choosing your new abode—your friend drops in clad likewise, and you take the children and start off for a stroll. As the pajama-feeling wears off, you become quite enthusiastic. You tell your friend that this is the life that you always wanted to lead; that a man doesn't really live in the city, but only exists; that it is a luxury to breathe such air, and enjoy the peaceful calm and perfect silence. Away inside of you something says that this is humbug, for, the fact is, the perfect silence strikes you as somewhat lonesome, and it even scares you a little. Then your children keep running up to you with strange plants and flowers, and asking you what they are; and you find it trying on the nerves to keep up the pretence of parental omniscience, and yet avoid the too-ready corrections of your friend.

"Johnny-jumper!" he says, scornfully, when you have hazarded a guess out of your meagre botanical vocabulary: "Why, man, that's no Johnny-jumper, that's a wild geranium." Then he addresses himself to the other inquiring youngster: "No, my boy, that's not a chestnut; that's an acorn. You won't get chestnuts till the fall, and

then you'll get them off the chestnut trees. That's an oak."

And so the walk is not altogether pleasant for you, and you find it safest to confine your remarks on country life to generalizations concerning the air and the silence.

No, Modestus, do not think for a moment that I am making game of you. Your friend would be no more at home at the uptown end of your little New York path than you are here in his little town; and he does not look on your ignorance of nature as sternly as you would look upon his unfamiliarity with your familiar landmarks. For his knowledge has grown upon him so naturally and unconsciously, that he hardly esteems it of any value.

But you can have no idea of the tragicomical disadvantage at which you will find yourself placed during your first year in the country—that is, the suburban country. You know, of course, when you move into a new neighborhood in the city you must expect to find the local butcher and baker and candlestick-maker ready to fall upon you, and to tear the very raiment from your back, until they are assured that you are a solvent permanency—and you have learned how to meet and repel their attacks. When you find that the same thing is done in the country, only in a different way, which you don't in the least understand, you will begin to experience a certain feeling of discouragement. Then, the humorous papers have taught you to look upon the Suburban Furnace as part of the

machinery or property of a merry jest; and you will be shocked to discover that to the newcomer it is a stern and cold reality. I use the latter adjective deliberately and advisedly. There will surely come an awful night when you will get home from New York with Mrs. Modestus in the midnight train, too tired for anything but a drowsy chat by the lingering embers of the library fire over the festivities of the evening. You will open your broad hospitable door, and enter an abode of chill and darkness. Your long-slumbering household has let fires and lights go out; the thermometer in the children's room stands at forty-five degrees, and there is nothing for you to do but to descend to the cellar, arrayed in your wedding garments, and try your unskilful best to coax into feeble circulation a small, faintly throbbing heart of fire that yet glows far down in the fire-pot's darksome internals. Then, when you have done what you can at the unwonted and unwelcome task, you will see, by the feeble candle-light, that your black dress-coat is gray with fine cinder dust, and that your hands are red and raw from the handling of heavy implements of toil. And then you will think of city home-comings after the theatre or the ball; of the quiet half-hour in front of the dying cannel; of the short cigar and the little nightcap, and of the gentle passage bedward, so easy in that warm and slumberous atmosphere that you hardly know how you have passed from weariness to peaceful dreams. And there will come to your spirit a sudden passion of humiliation and revolt

that will make you say to yourself: This is the end!

But you know perfectly well that it is *not* the end, however ardently you may wish that it was. There still remain two years of your un-subletable lease; and you set yourself, courageously and firmly, to serving out the rest of your time. You resolve, as a good prisoner, to make the best of it. You set to work to apply a little plain common-sense to the problem of the furnace—and find it not so difficult of partial solution after all. You face your other local troubles with a determination to minimize them at least. You resolve to check your too open expressions of dissatisfaction with the life you are leading. You hardly know why you do this, but you have, half-unconsciously, read a gentle hint in the faces of your neighbors; and as you see those kindly faces gathering oftener and oftener about your fire as the winter nights go on, it may, perhaps, dawn upon your mind that the existence you were so quick to condemn has grown dear to some of them.

But, whether you know it or not, that second year in the suburban house is a crisis and turning-point in your life, for it will make of you either a city man or a suburban, and it will surely save you from being, for all the rest of your days, that hideous betwixt-and-between thing, that uncanny creation of modern days of rapid transit, who fluctuates helplessly between one town and another; between town and city, and between town and city again, seeking an impossible and unattainable perfection, and scattering remonstrant servant-maids

and disputed bills for repairs along his cheerless track.

You have learned that the miseries of country life are not dealt out to you individually, but that they belong to the life, just as the troubles you fled from belong to the life of a great city. Of course, the realization of this fact only serves to make you see that you erred in making so radical a change in the current of your life. You perceive only the more clearly that as soon as your appointed time is up, you must reëstablish yourself in urban conditions. There is no question about it; whatever its merits may be—and you are willing to concede that they are many—it is obvious that country life does not suit you, or that you do not suit country life, one or the other. And yet—somehow incomprehensibly—the understanding that you have only shifted the burden you bore among your old neighbors has put a strangely new face on things, and has made you so readily tolerant that you are really a little surprised at yourself.

The winter goes by; the ever welcome glory of the spring comes back, and with it comes the natural human longing to make a garden, which is really, although we treat it lightly, a sort of humble first-cousin to the love of children. In your own breast you repress this weakness. Why taste of a pleasure which in another short year you mean to put permanently out of your reach? But there is no resisting the entreaties of your children, nor your wife's ready interest in their schemes, and you send for Pat Brannigan, and order a garden

made. Of course, it is only for the children, but it is strange how readily a desire to please the little ones spreads into a broader benevolence. When you look over your wife's list of plants and seeds, you are surprised to find how many of them are perennials. "They will please the next tenants here," says your wife; "think how nice it would have been for us to find some flowers all already for us, when we came here!" This may possibly lead you to reflecting that there might have been something, after all, in your original idea of suppressing the gardening instinct.

But there, after a while, is the garden—for these stories of suburban gardens where nothing grows, are all nonsense. True, the clematis and the moonflower obstinately refuse to clothe your cot with beauty; the tigridia bulbs rot in the ground, and your beautiful collection of irises produces a pitiful pennyworth of bloom to an intolerable quantity of leaves. But the petunias and the sweet-williams, and the balsams, and all the other ill-bred and obtrusive flowers leap promptly into life and vigor, and fight each other for the ownership of the beds. And the ever-faithful and friendly nasturtium comes early and stays late, and the limp morning-glory may always be counted upon to slouch familiarly over everything in sight, window-blinds preferred. But, bless your dear urban soul, what do *you* know about the relative values of flowers? When Mrs. Overtheway brings your wife a bunch of her superbest gladioli, you complacently return the compliment with a half-

bushel of magenta petunias, and you wonder that she does not show more enthusiasm over the gift.

In fact, during the course of the summer you have grown so friendly with your garden that, as you wander about its tangled paths in the late fall days, you cannot help feeling a twinge of yearning pain that makes you tremble to think what weakness you might have been guilty of had you not already burned your bridges behind you, and told the house agent that nothing would induce you to renew the lease next spring. You remember how fully and carefully you explained to him your position in the matter. With a glow of modest pride you recall the fact that you stated your case to him so convincingly, that he had to agree with you that a city life was the only life you and your family could possibly lead. He understood fully how much you liked the place and the people, and how, if this were only so, and that were only the other way, you would certainly stay. And you feel if the house agent agrees with you against his own interest, you must be right in your decision. Ah, dear Modestus! You know little enough about flowers; but oh, how little, little, little you know about suburban house agents!

Let us pass lightly over the third winter. It is a period of hesitation, perplexity, expectancy, and general awkwardness. You are, and you are not. You belong nowhere, and to no one. You have renounced your new allegiance, and you really do not know when, how, or at what point you are going to take up the old one again. And, in point of fact,

you do not regard this particular prospect with feelings of complete satisfaction. You remember, with a troubled conscience, the long list of social connections which you have found it too troublesome to keep up at long range. I say you, for I am quite sure that Mrs. Modestus will certify me that it was You and not She, who first declared that it was practically impossible to keep on going to the Smith's dinners or the Brown's receptions. You don't know this, my dear Modestus, but I assure you that you may take it for granted. You remember also that your return must carry with it the suggestion of the ignominy of defeat, and you know exactly the tone of kindly contemptuous, mildly assumed superiority with which your friends will welcome you back. And the approaching severance of your newer ties troubles your mind in another way. Your new friends do not try to dissuade you from going (they are too wise in a suburban way for that), but they say, and show in a hundred ways, that they are sorry to think of losing you. And this forbearance, so different from what you have to expect at the other end of your moving, reproaches and pains while it touches your heart. These people were all strangers to you two years and a half ago; they are chance rather than chosen companions. And yet, in this brief space of time—filled with little neighborly offices, with faithful services and tender sympathies in hours of sickness, and perhaps of death, with simple, informal companionship—you have grown into a closer and heartier friendship with

them than you have ever known before, save with the one or two old comrades with whose love your life is bound up. When you learned to leave your broad house-door open to the summer airs, you opened, unconsciously, another door; and these friends have entered in.

. . . . . .

It is a sunny Saturday afternoon in early April, but not exactly an April afternoon, rather one of those precocious days of delicious warmth and full, summer-like sunshine, that come to remind us that May and June are close behind the spring showers. You and Mrs. Modestus sit on the top step of your front veranda, just as you sat there on such a day, nearly three years ago. As on that day, you are talking of the future; but you are in a very different frame of mind to-day. In a few short weeks you will be adrift upon a sea of domestic uncertainty. For weeks you have visited the noisy city, hunting the proud and lofty mansion and the tortuous and humiliating flat, and it has all come to this—a steam-heated "family-hotel," until such time when you can find summer quarters; and then, with the fall, a new beginning of the weary search. And then—and then——

Coming and going along the street, your friends and neighbors give you cheery greeting, to which you respond somewhat absent-mindedly. You can hear the voices of your children and their little neighbor-friends playing in the empty garden plot. Your talk flags. You do not know just what you

are thinking about; still less do you know what your wife is thinking about—but you know that you wish the children would stop laughing, and that the people would stop going by and nodding pleasantly.

And now comes one who does not go by. He turns in at the gate and walks up the gravel path. He smiles and bows at you as if the whole world were sunshine—a trim little figure, dressed with such artistic care that there is a cheerfulness in the crease of his trousers and suavity in his very shirt-front. He greets Mrs. Modestus with a world of courtesy, and then he sits confidentially down by your side and says: "My dear sir, I am come to talk a little business with you."

No, you will not talk business. Your mind is firmly made up. Nothing will induce you to renew the lease.

"But, my dear sir," he says, with an enthusiasm that would be as boisterous as an ocean wave, if it had not so much oil on its surface: "I don't want you to renew the lease. I have a much better plan than that! I want you to *buy the house!*"

And then he goes on to tell you all about it; how the estate must be closed up; how the house may be had for a song; and he names a figure so small that it gives you two separate mental shocks; first, to realize that it is within your means; second, to find that he is telling the truth.

He goes on talking softly, suggestively, telling you what a bargain it is, telling you all the things you have put out of your mind for many months;

telling you—telling you nothing, and well he knows it. Three years of life under that roof have done his pleading for him.

Then your wife suddenly reaches out her hand and touches you furtively.

"Oh, buy it," she whispers, huskily, "if you can." And then she gathers up her skirts and hurries into the house.

Then a little later you are all in the library, and you have signed a little plain strip of paper, headed "Memorandum of Sale." And then you and the agent have drunk a glass of wine to bind the bargain, and then the agent is gone, and you and your wife are left standing there, looking at each other with misty eyes and questioning smiles, happy and yet doubtful if you have done right or wrong.

But what does it matter, my dear Modestus?

For you could not help yourselves.